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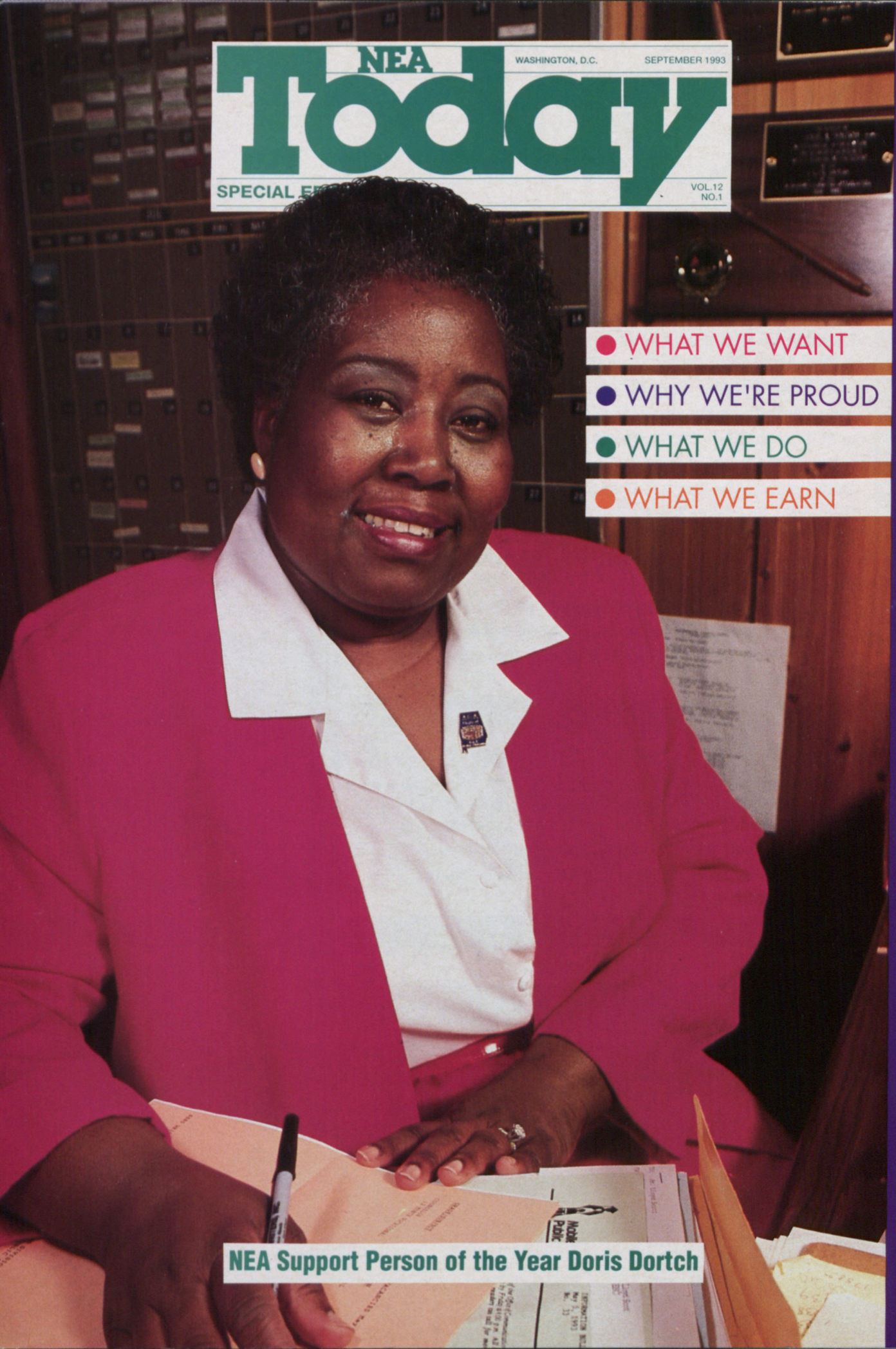

- WHAT WE WANT
- WHY WE'RE PROUD
- WHAT WE DO
- WHAT WE EARN

EDUCATION SUPPORT PERSONNEL

NEA Support Person of the Year Doris Dortch

EDITOR'S NOTE

For better and worse, education support workers are on the front lines.

When you're there for the kids, it's great. Ask Stan Uentillie, a special education aide in Arizona, who was there when one of his students learned to walk.

And when you're there for your colleagues, it's rewarding. Ask Indiana bus driver Pat Breitzka, who rallied troops to stop a school district's efforts to contract out jobs.

But, when the responsibility's too much, being on the front lines can be tough—even tragic. Ask the family of Kentucky custodian Marvin Hicks. Hicks tried to keep students out of harm's way—and was shot and killed instead.

But, good, bad, or indifferent, being on the front lines doesn't have to be lonely.

In these pages, you'll find the stories of dozens of your colleagues—scattered around the country but united by their membership in the nation's largest union and largest education organization.

You'll see that you've got colleagues you've never met who know what you're going through, who can teach you the lessons they've learned, and who can inspire you to organize for change.

You'll see a lot of faces on these pages, faces we hope you'll remember when you've got reason to celebrate or mourn. Because these are the faces of the National Education Association—and they are behind you, for better or worse.

Stefanie Weiss, editor

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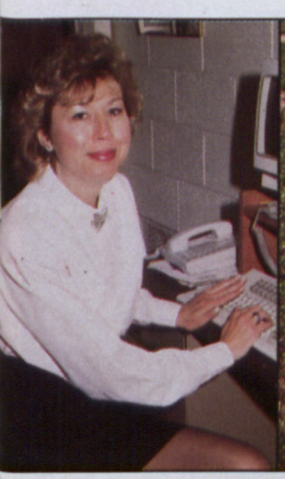
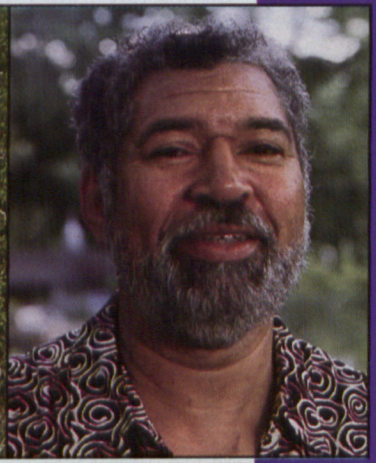




PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Not too long ago, I passed the quarter-century mark as an activist within our Association. At that time, a colleague asked me what accomplishments had given me greatest pride.

I didn't hesitate for a moment. My mind turned back to my tenure as president of the Michigan Education Association. And I recalled, with stunning vividness, the day we won full and equal membership for Michigan's education support personnel. That moment marked a turning point for MEA—and for NEA. For it was then that we started our long march toward true solidarity.

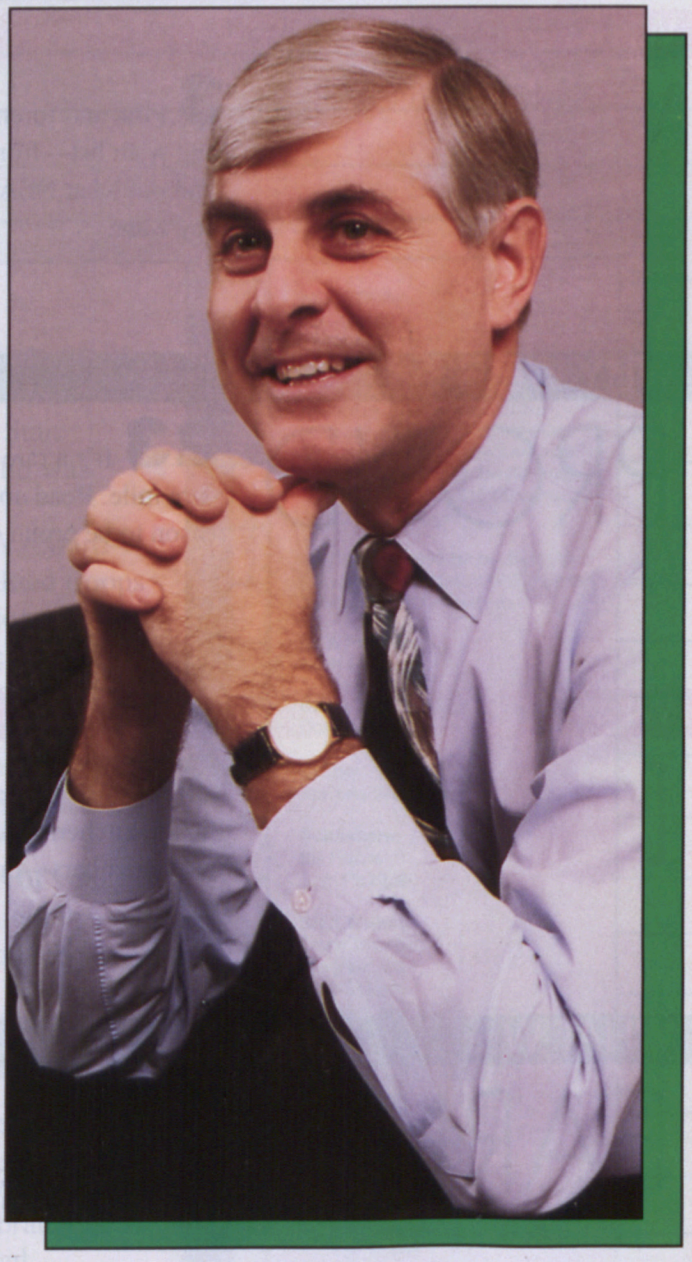
Back then, in 1978, NEA's ESP membership stood at less than 10,000. Since then, thanks to you, that number has multiplied more than 20-fold. And with every increase, our Association has become larger—not just in numbers, but in clout, in conviction, in compassion, above all in courage.

Our Association owes you an enormous debt of gratitude. And we intend to pay off that debt.

So often in the past, you have gone into battle with courage as your only weapon, integrity as your only shield, and conscience as your only guide. I believe that starting now, NEA must ensure that every time you enter the fray, you do so with the dedicated support of every teacher in America . . . and with a national consensus that says simply, very simply, America needs you.

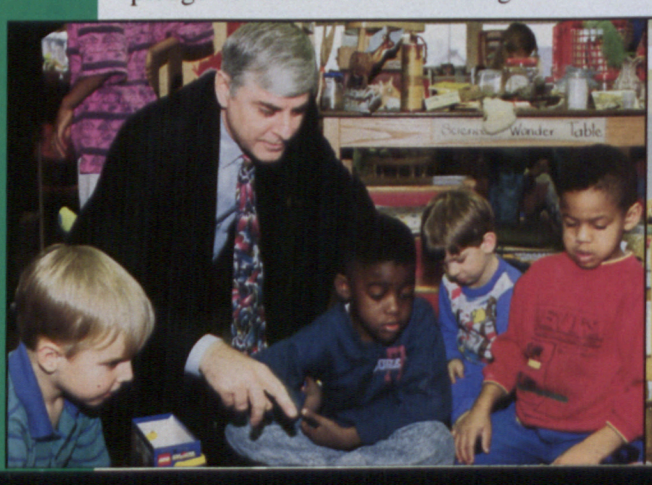
As your president, I promise to join you in moving toward the day when your importance is fully acknowledged and fully appreciated—not just within our Association, but in school districts and school boards, in your home communities, in state houses and—yes—in the White House.

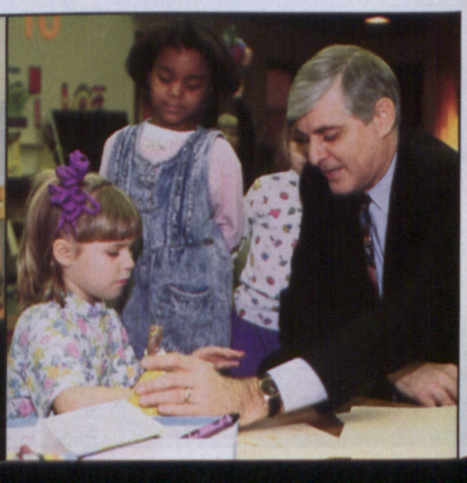
On behalf of your 2.1 million colleagues, I pledge our commitment to this goal.



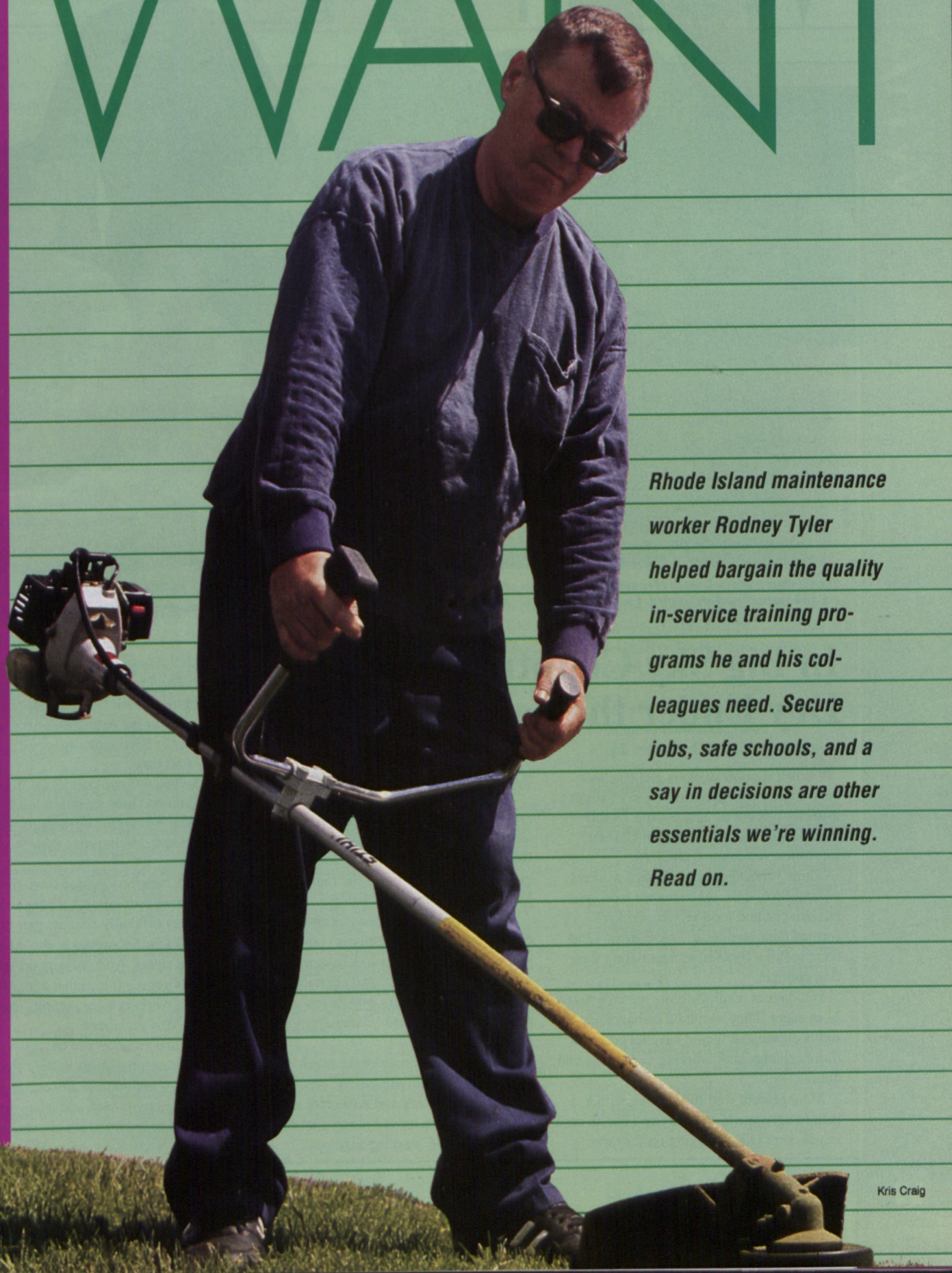
NEA President

Keith Geiger





WHAT WE WANT



Rhode Island maintenance worker Rodney Tyler helped bargain the quality in-service training programs he and his colleagues need. Secure jobs, safe schools, and a say in decisions are other essentials we're winning. Read on.

Kris Craig

Kyle Brehm

School employees in Laurel, Montana, won contracts soon after teachers and support workers unified. Local Association leaders are, from left, standing: Trudy Downer, Herb Townsend, Deb McGrath, John Stratton. Sitting: Deb Horning, Wilma Enger, and Mona Sisk.

In Big Sky Country: Staying Dry Under the Same Umbrella

When support workers and teachers band together for a common cause, small miracles can occur. Just ask the 75 ESP members of Montana's Laurel Unified Education Association (LUEA).

Three years ago, Laurel office workers, paraprofessionals, maintenance workers, bus drivers, and food service workers formed their own local Association—and were looking forward to negotiating their first contract.

But district administrators weren't nearly so eager. They wanted a management rights clause that would have let administrators change staff working conditions and hours at will.

Management's attitude, along with a lack of agreement on salary and health care issues, kept talks dragging on for more than a year and a half with no end in sight.

To speed things along, the Laurel workers looked to the local teachers Association—and found immediate support. Hoping for more bargaining clout, the two groups merged into one—the Laurel Unified Education Association.

With no progress in negotiations for either group, LUEA members voted to strike. The tactic worked. A little over a week later, both groups had contracts.

The support workers won raises, a fully-paid medical plan, and *no* management rights clause.

"Together, our groups have much more power than they do separately," says Mona Sisk, a payroll clerk and Association officer. "Things sure moved along a lot faster when we started working together."

Other Association members agree:

➤ The 21 teacher-members of the Arlington (South Dakota) Education Association led Arlington's 16 support workers in becoming organized for the very first time.

The bus drivers, custodians, food service workers, and lone secretary felt that management was taking advantage of them. They wanted to improve their working conditions.

AEA members guided them through the organizing process and, a year and a half ago, they officially became part of AEA. "We all felt that everyone should have bargaining rights. And our support staffers weren't getting things that a lot of other support workers were getting," says Brian Field, AEA president.

The new members of the AEA family made substantial gains in their first-ever contract—including a 35-cent-an-hour raise, a salary ladder, and a bus driving schedule based on years of experience.

➤ In North Kingstown, Rhode Island, a

one-day strike by the 60 members of the North Kingstown Association of Paraprofessionals—with tremendous support from the North Kingstown Education Association and the North Kingstown ESP Association—succeeded in getting the paras into the state retirement system.

For years, the paras had tried to get into the retirement system, with no success. The other two employee Associations, already in the system, felt the paras were being discriminated against and gave their cause full support.

That made all the difference. Only three of North Kingstown's 350 teachers crossed the picket line. All 10 schools in the district shut down.

Result: on the afternoon of the strike, school officials met with the aides and agreed to place them in the retirement system, with full credit for all years of service.

You Know You Have Good Relations with Teachers When...

✔ In-service workshops include topics of interest to support workers as well as teachers.

✔ Issues become subjects for discussion, not division.

✔ Support employees as well as teachers are represented on school and district committees.

✔ ESP Association leaders and teacher Association leaders meet regularly to discuss issues of concern to each. (Often one group doesn't realize how certain issues affect the other.)

✔ Support and teacher leaders attend each other's meetings.

✔ Teachers go all out to celebrate National ESP Day and support employees do the same for National Teacher Day.

✔ ESP and teacher members join forces to elect friends of education to public office and to sponsor projects that benefit the community.

Gary Emeigh

Delaware paraprofessional Dorothy Pauls works with students at Richardson Park Elementary School. She works well with teachers both on and off the job.

Work Together, Play Together

Dorothy Pauls, a teacher assistant in Wilmington, Delaware, is an activist in the Red Clay Paraprofessional Association. RCPA represents not only classroom paraprofessionals but also bus drivers, bus aides, and Chapter 1 parent coordinators.

Members of RCPA and the Red Clay Education Association work together on many projects, ranging from professional development to political efforts. The lines of communication are always open.

How can support employees and teachers begin to build positive relationships?
First, I think the groups have to understand and respect each other. One way to get a good start is to make sure your contract spells out specifically which jobs are yours and which jobs are teachers'.

Take time to study and understand the contract. Then, if a conflict comes up—between a para and a new teacher, for example—the employee involved will be able to explain informally to the teacher why she doesn't perform certain tasks but does perform others.

When we joined the NEA family five years ago, it was our ability to do that that led to greater teacher respect for our group as a whole.

How do you go beyond respect?
For us, the key was joint Association social affairs. These activities helped the teachers and support employees get acquainted on an individual basis—to get to know one another as people.

A big ice breaker was—and still is—the Delaware Education Association's summer leadership training session. Both teachers and support workers live on campus at a local college for three or four days, rooming together and socializing together.

Then you follow up by working together to achieve common goals?
Right. And there's no job distinction when we work as volunteers to achieve common priorities.

Our teachers and ESP have worked together on community fundraisers and the political campaigns of Association-endorsed local and state candidates. Last year, we jointly sponsored a reception for local candidates that included an "Ask the Candidates" segment for members.

DEA's PAC committee is composed of school employees in all job categories: We travel to Washington, D.C., to lobby together, and we party together.

What makes it all work?
The bottom line: we see one another as people, not job categories. We appreciate one another—and it shows.

WANT

Inching Toward Health Care Reform

Every American should have access to quality health care at a reasonable cost. That's the long-term goal shared by President Clinton and the NEA.

Lawmakers in Washington, D.C., will be debating the President's national health care reform proposal throughout the year ahead. Meanwhile, most NEA members will be working to head off the high cost of health insurance at the bargaining table.

Just to get or keep coverage, many support workers are paying huge percentages of their income in premiums—or trading off raises for lower deductibles. Some simply cross their fingers and go without.

But NEA members in San Diego recently bucked the trend: they now have better coverage—and pay less for it.

San Diego school support workers used to earn less but pay more for health insurance coverage than any other group of local school employees.

Not so any more. The organizing efforts of the San Diego Classified Employee Association, which represents 2,000 paraprofessionals, paid off.

Last year, before contract negotiations started for all five classifications of school employees in San Diego, SDCEA leaders talked informally with each group to explain the situation—and appeal to their colleagues' sense of fairness.

"We asked administrators, for example, to consider the fact that they get big salaries and pay nothing for medical coverage, while we make much less, yet pay hundreds of dollars each month," says SDCEA President Charlotte Brown.

The strategy worked. On the matter of health benefits, the groups decided to negotiate jointly so that every education employee would have the same benefits.

The five employee groups formed a health benefits committee to develop an equitable plan with the district. Together the groups' representatives scrutinized the existing plans—studying who used which benefits and who didn't—and investigated possible new insurance carriers.

"The result was fantastic," says Brown. "Everyone—from administrator to custodian—now has the same choice of two HMO plans and a plan for using private doctors. And because we raised so many questions, San Diego County is reviewing its own medical plan for school employees."

Around the country, other NEA local affiliates are also making progress.

➤ In Clark County, Nevada, members of the Education Support Employee Association have helped control the rising cost of health care coverage by taking matters into their own hands.

The support workers have entered into a legal partnership with Clark County Classroom Teachers Association members to form their own insurance company. The company has its own service department, accountant, and claims adjusters.

A joint "articulation committee"—with equal representation from both groups—meets monthly to review expenditures, personnel changes, and expansion proposals.

"We've been able to cut administrative costs by one third," says Annie Barclay, ESEA president. "And our members now get a far better insurance package than before. We're able to pool our numbers to get more competitive pricing from vendors, and we have seven customer service reps available to help process claims."

➤ In 12 New York locals, support employees receive health care through a self-funded plan developed by Association staff and district management. The new plan helps counter rising health care costs by cutting administrative expenses and adopting cost containment methods.

The plan has been bargained into the contracts to ensure that no provisions will change. One of those provisions allows new employees to join the plan without regard to "preexisting conditions."

Above, San Diego paraprofessional Penny Huisman supervises play time. Left, Sharon Wilson helps students with paperwork.

Photographs by Bob Riha, Jr.

Charlotte Brown, a paraprofessional and SDCEA president, led her members in a fight for better health benefits at a lower cost. Despite the odds, they won.

What You Can Do...

The national health care package President Clinton plans to submit to Congress will be debated for months to come. The outcome will likely affect your health and your finances. You have the right to be heard. As a citizen and NEA member, you can take part in the debate by:

✔ Becoming informed. Know the terms used in the health care reform debate. Attend town meetings on the subject. Stay tuned to *NEA Today* for details on how the battle's going.

✔ Educating your colleagues on the key issues: access to health care for everyone, cost containment, and quality assurance.

✔ Explaining to your colleagues the NEA position on health care reform (see accompanying interview). All local presidents received a copy of the NEA position last fall. To get one for yourself, write to NEA Publishing, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

✔ Urging your local Association to link up with community groups—like the League of Women Voters—to support progressive change. Join such groups and attend their meetings.

✔ Writing your congressional representative and senators about your views and urge your colleagues to do the same. Address your letters to the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515, and to the U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510.

The Big Picture

At presstime, President Clinton was about to unveil his proposal for national health care reform. How are NEA members affected by the current crisis in health care access and cost? And what will NEA do to influence the national debate? **NEA Today** ***staff asked the Director of the Association's Center for Health Care Reform, John Dunlop.***

Joe DiDio

How have ESP members been affected by the health care crisis to date?
Most school support workers have health insurance, but they're less likely than teachers to elect to take coverage. Almost 99 percent of ESP were offered health insurance, but only 79 percent took the option. For teachers, that figure is 91 percent.

Why's that?
We can only guess, and our guess is that it's a matter of expense. Support workers are, in fact, often required to pay a greater share of the premium than teachers. Their lower salaries compound the problem.

If health care costs aren't controlled, there'll probably be even more nonparticipants in the future.

What position will NEA take in the national debate on health care reform?
The NEA Board of Directors voted to back a single-payer health care system for all residents of the U.S. Under a single-payer system, government would be the sole provider of health insurance or the sole payer of health care costs. The system NEA seeks would have mechanisms to control costs without lowering the quality of care.

As the fight for the Clinton health care reform package heats up, what principles will NEA fight for?
NEA will push for quality care and cost containment as equal top priorities. NEA leaders, staff, and members will lobby hard for a policy that guarantees universal access, covers preventive care, and puts cost controls on all medical expenses.

NEA leaders will consider supporting health care reforms that do not create a single-payer system as long as they move the nation closer to that goal.

WANT

On the Front Lines

High school security guard Tommy Muse watches over North High School in Flint, Michigan. Colleague and fellow NEA member Mary Burton monitors a hallway at the school.

In March, a student walked into a classroom in East Carter High School in Carter County, Kentucky, pointed a gun at the teacher, and fired, killing the teacher instantly.

When school custodian Marvin Hicks heard the shots, he ran to the classroom to help. As he entered, the gunman fired. Hicks, a long-respected member of the Kentucky Education Support Personnel Association (KESPA), was killed.

Hicks' death is a tragic reminder: with 100,000 students bringing guns to school every day, schools are no longer safe havens, and school employees are no longer safe.

Across the country, NEA support members are on the front lines of the new battleground—and they're calling out for help.

➤ "In 15 years I've never seen it so bad," says U. T. (Tommy) Muse, a security guard for North High School in Flint, Michigan.

"We've had pepper mace sprayed at one school, and we've had gang fights at others," says Muse. "We also have a public transportation area that's just a powder keg waiting to blow."

Muse, president of the Flint Security Association, says the answer to the nation's school violence epidemic isn't as simple as putting metal detectors in doorways.

"We need training, and we need more protection. At the same time, students need to learn conflict resolution and mediation techniques so they won't turn to violence."

➤ In Indiana, a parent assaulted school bus driver Tom Brooks. Brooks was hospitalized with a shattered cheekbone, but the assailant was only charged with a misdemeanor.

As a result, the Indiana State Teachers Association lobbied for tougher laws. In May, the Indiana House and Senate passed legislation that raised assaults on school employees from a misdemeanor to a felony.

"We were also successful in getting legislation that outlaws trespassing on school grounds and making threats against school employees," says Mike Jester, an ISTA UniServ director who helped write the legislation.

"People need to understand that school employees—from custodians who work after school hours to cafeteria workers who have to confront students disrupting the lunchroom—are most at risk."

➤ Richmond, Virginia, has had its own problems with school violence—from weapons carried onto school buses to fights and shootings in district schools. The rise in violence has people in the community worried—but ready for action.

"Legislation, laws, training—we're considering every possible solution to school violence," says Richmond (Virginia) bus driver Gracie Boderick.

Boderick is part of a community task force of parents, administrators, and school staff formed last year to try to tackle the problem.

"Our first job is to collect real figures from the schools, so we're preparing a survey of all school employees in Richmond," Boderick notes. "We know it's going to be a long haul to make our schools safe again, but we've got to do something."

➤ Barbara Young, an in-house suspension aide in Las Vegas, Nevada, agrees. "We've seen a steady increase in violence on our school campuses. Given the work that I do, I'm especially afraid of what might happen next.

"What we need are programs designed to teach students conflict resolution skills," says Young. "That way, they'll have alternatives to violent behavior. We also need to find ways of dealing with students who commit violent acts. Every school needs a plan for that."

"What all of us need," says Michigan's Tommy Muse, "are programs designed to help students. We need support from the communities and parents, because it's their children we're serving. And we need training to help us diffuse situations before it's too late.

"When it comes down to it," Muse says, "that's not much to ask when you weigh it against the life of a child or a school employee."

Photos by Robert Chase

School Safety Is Everyone's Job

George Butterfield is deputy director of the National School Safety Center in Westlake Village, California. The Center provides materials and training in crisis prevention and intervention.

Why do you think school violence is on the rise?
There are many reasons. One is that young people are coming to school without knowing alternative ways to approach conflict. Many of them believe violence is their only option. But there's another reason for the increase in weapon carrying that people don't realize.

What's that?
We've found that most of the kids who carry weapons into schools do so for protection. These are young people with generally positive self-esteem. They're not out to attack or intimidate anyone; they're just afraid of getting hurt. Kids no longer see schools as safe places. It's dangerous just getting to school, so many young people decide they'd feel safer carrying a weapon. When districts institute zero tolerance for weapons, we'll have made some progress.

What else do school districts need to do?
We need to deal with the people who are the violent aggressors, and we need to give the students an alternative way of resolving conflict. That's why a comprehensive program of mediation and established policies is the answer.

What about training for school staff?
Training is critical, especially for school support staff—they're often the first line of defense confronting either students or strangers. Training on how to break up a fight and how to mediate a problem should be part of a regular in-service program for all school staff.

Where should schools start to address the problem?
Schools need to work on all fronts. First they have to come up with a comprehensive plan that all school staff contribute to. You need a community support system, you need to give the young people alternatives, you need to link up with the local police. All of these are critical, and support staff have every right to push for them.

Saving Your School

What can you do to make your school safer?

✔ Join or form a coalition with other community organizations to fight violence.

✔ Call for training for school staff on topics including dealing with disruptive students, mediating disputes, and breaking up fights.

✔ Help your district establish clear policies on weapons, threats against school personnel, and trespassing on school grounds.

✔ Establish contract language or school board policies that call for a safe school environment for students and staff.

✔ Lobby legislators for tougher laws against those involved in school violence.

✔ Call for a comprehensive crisis prevention and intervention plan.

✔ Have your school conduct an annual school safety assessment. Where's the school vulnerable? How are the doors, the lighting, the locks? How safe are school grounds? Do trees or shrubs prevent adults from seeing everything that's going on outside?

For more information, contact the National School Safety Center, 16830 Ventura Blvd., Suite 200, Encino, CA 91436, 805-373-9977.

Or order *School Violence: A Survival Guide for School Staff* from the NEA Professional Library. Call 800/229-4200 for details.

Gaining a Voice in School Reform

Who's making the decisions that affect your work life?

Who's deciding between a nine and a 12-month calendar? Between a four- and seven-period day? Between segregating special education students and integrating them into regular classrooms?

As the school reform movement enters its second decade, hundreds of schools and school districts around the country are involving teachers in the decision-making process. And some—a small but growing number—have begun to involve support staff, too.

Blakely Elementary School on Bainbridge Island, Washington, is one of those schools. When there were behavior problems on the playground, administrators, teachers, and support staff met to discuss it.

"We listened to the aides who work on the playground every day," says school secretary Maxine Stone, "and all of us together came up with a good idea. Now we allow students to write about the behavior that got them into trouble and designate someone they'd like to talk with to solve the problem.

"Most often, the problem's solved by the student and playground aide," Stone says. "But if that's not working, the student has a chance to constructively involve someone else."

A few miles away, the Commodore Middle School community has been considering several revolutionary steps, like adopting block scheduling and setting up interdisciplinary teams to teach groups of students.

Changes like these will affect lunch schedules, cleaning schedules, and what classroom aides do. So Commodore support staffers serve on the restructuring committees that will make the decisions.

Inclusive committees make sense, says Dennis Brackett, president of the Kentwood (Michigan) Education Support Personnel Association and member of the Kentwood Total Quality Management (TQM) Committee.

"The people who do the work should be the ones making decisions about what needs to be done."

TQM committees provide a voice for all employees in school decision making, Brackett adds. "It's an effective way of streamlining the bureaucracy—and making the best possible decisions for everyone involved."

A few other places where decision making is being shared:

➤ In Pinellas County, a district NEA chose as its Florida Learning Lab, members of the Pinellas Education Support Personnel Association (PESPA) serve on each of the district's 137 committees responsible for site-based decision making.

Thanks to heavy lobbying by Association members, the Florida legislature recently passed a law requiring school districts to form school advisory committees that include teachers, parents, and support personnel.

"The law says that everyone who works in the school should have a voice in the decision-making," says PESPA President Vickie Fierro.

➤ In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, NEA support

Ellen Banner

Buzzzzz.....

Are you hearing the irritating hum of buzzwords you can't exactly define? You're not alone. Here's a down-and-dirty explanation of a few of the most popular ones.

➤ *Site-based decision making:* when people at the school building level—not central office administrators, but principals, teachers, support employees, and parents—make the decisions about how the school is run.

➤ *Total quality management:* a type of management that brings employees and managers together to focus on one task and one task only: creating a quality product. In education circles, that means the greatest possible student learning.

➤ *Cooperative learning:* a method of teaching that emphasizes setting up small groups of students to work together, pool their knowledge, and help each other out.

➤ *Detracking:* stopping the practice of grouping students by ability and, instead, putting students with different learning styles and speeds in the same group. Instruction is personalized, and all students are expected to learn.

➤ *Block scheduling:* a way to organize longer class periods (typically four longer blocks each day instead of seven shorter ones) to give students more time for hands-on learning activities.

members have improved communications with local administrators as they've served on school transformation committees. Among other things, ESP there have helped decide whether to adopt a year-round calendar and how to use classroom and parking lot space most effectively.

Time spent on these committees has paid unexpected dividends, says Allyson Story, a teacher associate at Garfield Elementary School. She says serving on school advisory councils has developed a spirit of camaraderie that wasn't there before.

"More than the concrete accomplishments we've accumulated is the respect we've earned in the teachers' eyes," she says.

"And working more closely with teachers has helped us all do a better job of educating kids."

Secretary Maxine Stone chats with fourth graders (left to right) Nolan Donahue, Peter Scribner, and Catie Deminaeuw on the playground at Blakely Elementary School on Bainbridge Island in Washington State.

Taking Over

Melanie d'Anna

Linda Friestad, vice president of the 600-member Mesa (Arizona) Education Support Personnel Association, says new committees are making for better schools as they take over central office duties. A secretary at Field Elementary School, Friestad is a member of the district's new professional growth committee.

Why was a professional growth committee started?
When the director of the department of professional growth retired, the board of education decided not to replace him. The board based its decision on budget constraints. They saw transferring central office functions to a school employee committee as cost-effective. They kept a professional growth specialist and two secretaries who work at the direction of the new professional development committee.

What does the committee do?
We enable school employees in many fields to enroll in classes they need for career development. We also recruit and hire teachers for the classes, critique the curriculum, and evaluate school employees' classroom performance in the career development program. We do all the public relations to encourage professional growth, making classes available free of charge or at a nominal rate.

How many ESP members are on the committee? How are they chosen?
Five of the 27 committee members are support staff. They're chosen by the president of the Association for a two-year term.

How effectively does the committee supplant the central office?
It's been extremely effective. In fact, moving to an employee committee has turned out to be one of the best changes we could imagine. The central office had not always been seeing our needs. This professional growth committee is much more responsive.
The committee has been in action only a couple of years, but we've met our goals in becoming "user friendly." In other words, there are no long waits to be accepted into a staff development activity. When someone expresses a need for a particular class, we quickly find a teacher for that topic and get started. And we've made major strides in encouraging support staff to take courses.

How is this enhancing instruction?
This committee is helping employees do a better job because they feel a part of the big picture—they're acquainted with the goals and objectives of the district.
As they get more training, employees also come to feel better about themselves, and they're more able to understand the role they can play in meeting student needs.

Do you think other ESP locals should get involved in school reform?
Without doubt. ESP members should have a big role. We play an integral part in the success of educating children. Teachers deliver the instruction, but we set up the whole environment in which they deliver it.

WHAT WE

WANT

Stopping Subcontractors Before They Start

Political action is emerging as the most effective way to stop school boards from handing support staff positions to private contractors.

"Head it off at the source," says outgoing New Jersey Education Association President Betty Kraemer.

NJEA supports Assembly Bill 1220, which would prohibit school boards statewide from subcontracting the jobs of employees covered by existing contract agreements.

But even if A-1220 passes, Kraemer notes, political action will need to continue at the local level. "You have to keep proponents of subcontracting from winning seats on school boards in the first place," she says.

What to do when your board already has subcontracting on its mind?

A year ago that question faced the 6,500-member Orange Educational Support Personnel Association in Orlando, Florida. The issue: the district's intention to hire two subcontractors to handle 23 night custodian positions in three buildings and a five-person grounds crew.

OESPA's response: hold the district to contract language requiring "impact bargaining" before contracts are let—then strengthen the language.

The impact bargaining dealt not with the 28 custodian and grounds maintenance positions themselves (all were shifted to the private sector for the duration of the three-year contracts), but with the placement of the district employees who'd been in those positions.

Florida landscaper Ernie Lampkin sounded an early warning about subcontracting efforts.

OESPA leaders Ruby Strickland and Bill Humphreys fought for members' jobs.

All were offered other jobs with the district. None was demoted. OESPA made sure the district gave them choices and took into consideration special situations like length of commute or responsibilities for child care.

Still, OESPA leaders aren't altogether happy with the way this first go-round of impact bargaining worked out.

"There was confusion about exactly when the district was obliged to notify us that contracting out was under consideration," says Bill Humphreys, OESPA's chief negotiator, who headed the impact bargaining team.

"In our latest contract, we've added a provision that the board notify us, seek our input, and share information as soon as it starts to investigate the feasibility of contracting out," Humphreys adds.

OESPA has not given up on getting rid of the subcontractors altogether.

"We're asking principals and teachers and support staff to document deficiencies on the part of subcontractors, such as the need for extra work because they didn't complete a job or security violations like unlocked doors," says OESPA President Ruby Strickland.

"We've also got three new board members—one endorsed by us—who seem to be taking a critical look at subcontracting," Humphreys notes.

In the meantime, he observes: "The general feeling is that cleaning service isn't quite as good as when our own people were supplying it.

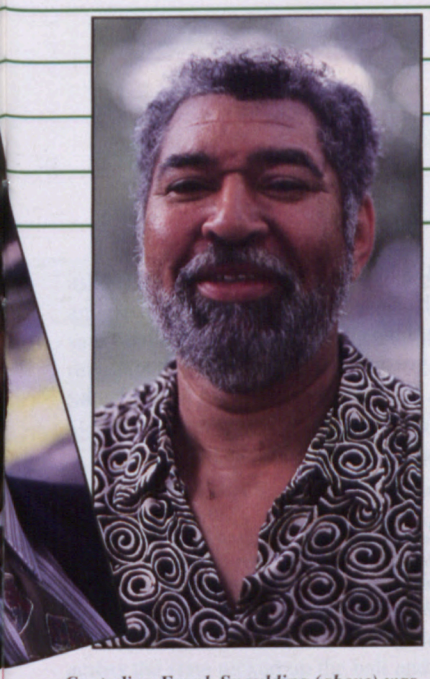
"We also miss the personal service—the willingness to go the extra mile, take stuff out to your car, for instance."

➤ Facing the school board's threat to contract out bus service, the ESP and teacher members of New Jersey's Evesham Education Association handled political action a bit differently.

They persuaded the board to put the subcontracting issue on the budget ballot in April 1993.

Specifically, the Evesham voters were

PUBLIC JOBS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Photographs by Tom Burton

Custodian Frank Spaulding (above) was on the "impact bargaining" team.

asked to approve a waiver that would allow the district to spend nearly $1 million above the capital spending ceiling for two purposes: to keep class size from increasing and to retain the district's bus drivers on staff.

By a 2:1 margin, that's exactly what the voters chose to do.

➤ If you can't head it off, "get it in writing." Michigan's 32-member Hudson Educational Support Personnel Association finally got anti-subcontracting provisions after being without a contract for three and a half years.

The key language is spelled out in a letter of understanding that's part of the contract bargained in 1992:

"The employer retains the right to assign bargaining unit work to nonbargaining unit members *for incidental work* (emphasis added)," and: "In case of severe financial crisis, the parties agree to discuss other possible options."

In other words, the district agreed to bargain major subcontracting.

➤ About 100 miles south of Fairbanks, Alaska, the 21 members of the Delta-Greeley Educational Support Personnel Association are also proud of anti-subcontracting language included in their contract last year:

"The district shall not contract or subcontract bargaining unit work out of the school district if subcontracting or contracting work out would result in layoffs or reduction of hours of bargaining unit employees."

When Jobs Are in Danger, Go Public

School bus driver Pat Breitzka is secretary of The Classified Association of the Michigan City Area Schools, Michigan City, Indiana.

"Last year on the last day I drove before the Christmas break," Breitzka recalls, "headlines in the evening paper announced that the school corporation had decided to subcontract food service, maintenance, custodial, and transportation work.

"I thought to myself: 'Merry Christmas from the school corporation.'"

Did the headlines make you mad?
Yes. As a bus driver and a taxpayer, I knew that subcontracting was not what was best for our school district. That's why I jumped in to work against it, eventually becoming chief spokesperson for The Classified Association.

What did you do?
We wrote letters to the editor. We got on local TV news and radio talk shows. We sat down and made a list of every organization we could think of—from the board of realtors to private clubs to church groups to other unions and the PTA, and we spoke at their meetings. We got 10,000 signatures on petitions.

So people believed you?
Yes, because we had the facts. In February, the board put out the bid specifications, and we compared their specs with what we did—and for how much money. That's how we convinced the groups we spoke to: we had the facts.

Did you change the school board's mind ?
No. All seven members were firmly in favor of subcontracting. In fact, last spring they forced us to sign a contract that made no mention of subcontracting. We'd been without a contract for a year, and they said if we didn't sign they'd subcontract on the spot.

But there was a happy ending?
Yes, through political action. That's how our public information campaign paid off. In June 1992, the three candidates we backed all got elected—defeating three incumbents. Next year, we'll try to get our candidates into the other four seats.

Are you safe 'til then?
I think so—there's a swing voter who may vote with us. What we really need is to have in our contract the same provisions the board was willing to give the outside contractors: six months' notice of intention to change the contractor.

Any advice to others facing the subcontracting threat?
Sure: know your facts, inform the public, and make sure voters know what each candidate represents.

How To Stop Subcontracting

✔ Ask members to report all rumors about contracting out.
✔ Monitor board of education meetings closely.
✔ Check out the subcontracting history of new administrators.
✔ Stay in touch with your state Association and with other locals.
✔ Be especially alert during a budget crunch.
✔ Make written suggestions for improving services and cutting waste.
✔ Make sure elected officials, community leaders, and the general public know where ESP members stand on contracting out.
✔ Request copies of any studies the district does on contracting out.

Adapted from the *NJEA Reporter*, January 1993. For the complete checklist and a copy of NJEA's bill A-1220, write Rob Broderick, New Jersey Education Association, P.O. Box 1211, Trenton, NJ 08607, 609/599-4561, FAX 609/394-3355.

Stopping Bad Medicine with Good Politics

Amid the hubbub of an average school day, a Clark County, Nevada, school clerk made an honest mistake. She inadvertently gave an asthmatic student the medication for a student with cerebral palsy. A frantic stomach pumping averted true disaster.

It's easy to see how it could happen. Cathy Byington, a secretary in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, says office staff in her district dispense up to 25 to 30 pills a day to students. Who has the time or expertise to handle that, answer phones, greet the public, and process forms in triplicate?

Louisiana paraprofessional Judy Alexander says the whole topic gives her nightmares. What if you accidentally give a student the wrong medication and he dies? And what if you're asked to perform a medical procedure and something goes wrong?

"We agreed to attend to a child with a tracheotomy and administer treatments to a child with a respiratory disorder," Alexander says, "but then we had parents requesting other precarious medical procedures. Where do you draw the line?"

With budgets tight and few nurses or health aides on the payroll, classroom aides and school secretaries around the country are being forced to handle students' medical needs without the time or training to do the job right.

Attempts to put a stop to the problem usually end when administrators throw up their hands and say they simply can't afford to hire medical professionals to do the job.

But things didn't stop there in Illinois. After years of doing what was asked of them, NEA members in Elgin fought back.

"We joined forces with nurses and parent-teacher groups to make the point that

Secretary Cathy Byington hopes a new state law requiring nurses to dispense medication will "free up my time to serve children better."

Mike Roemer

"The legal departments for the IEA, NEA, the Illinois Nurses Association, and the Illinois State Board of Education, to name a few, have all consistently maintained that it is clearly not legal for any support personnel to administer medications to students or to perform other procedures covered by the Illinois Nursing Act. In addition, it has been noted that no employer can indemnify any employee for committing a criminal act.

"It is a credit to the dedication, diligence, and cooperation of our secretaries and nurses that no tragedies have occurred, although mistakes have occurred. However, as an organization we can no longer tolerate the subjecting of our members to the danger and liability of administering medications and performing other medical procedures.

"Therefore, effective with the opening of the 1991-92 school year, our members will cease the practices of administering medications and performing other medical procedures. The Association stands ready to provide whatever legal assistance is necessary to support its position, and it is committed to protecting its members relative to any and all actions concerning this matter."

The Letter That Launched a Law

One letter got the ball rolling in Illinois. It was written by secretary and local Association President Debra Hernandez and sent to the president of the school board, the superintendent, the media, and area parents.

asking ESP staffers to dispense medication and perform medical procedures was not safe," says Debra Hernandez, a school secretary and president of the District U-46 Secretarial Association. "We let state officials know that these duties were not ours."

NEA members sent a letter to parents saying frankly that mistakes were being made, and that they would no longer continue to risk students' lives or their own careers to save the district a few dollars (see box).

Illinois Education Association leaders across the state picked up the ball and ran with it. IEA introduced a law and launched a massive lobbying campaign—complete with phone calls, postcards, and personal visits—to get it passed.

Success came in 1991, when the Illinois General Assembly overrode Governor Jim Edgar's veto, and made this sentence the law of the land: "Under no circumstances shall teachers or other non-administrative school employees, except school nurses, be required to administer medications to students or to perform other procedures covered by the Illinois Nursing Act."

Louisiana paraprofessional Judy Alexander wants to help students—not endanger them. She asks the toughest question: "Where do we draw the line?"

Brad Kemp

Just this year, through similar lobbying, South Dakota school employees prompted their state legislature to pass a bill mandating that a registered nurse must supervise dispensation of medicine to children with special needs. The legislation will go into effect in July 1994.

Concludes Illinois secretary Debra Hernandez: "It was a great relief to finally break through on this issue and to see that by making administrative changes and revising scheduling we could expand the coverage of nurses to meet our demands statewide."

Rx: Protection Under the Law

Photographic Service Corp.

Sandra Holman is associate general counsel for the Illinois Education Association.

Exactly what does the Illinois law do?
It prevents school district employees—with the exception of certified school nurses—from being required to administer medication. For example, a school secretary cannot be required to distribute student medication.

Considering the dangers involved in requiring school secretaries to shove aside other duties and pay attention to the medical needs of students, this law marks a significant victory for support staff statewide.

What types of medication or medical procedures are covered by the law?
The law prohibits anyone but certified school nurses from giving students any form of oral medication. Prescription and non-prescription drugs as well as anaphylactic shock injections (bee sting antibody) are considered medication.

But procedures often performed by special education school employees, such as tracheal suctioning or tube cleaning, catheterization, stomach tube feedings, and diapering may not be considered administration of medication. Consequently, districts may continue to attempt to require staff to perform these functions. The procedures that the law doesn't address should be addressed by local Associations in collective bargaining contracts.

How can school districts provide these medical services?
The Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois State Board of Education have recommended several options for school districts. These include increasing the number of certified school nurses in the district, having parents or guardians come to school to administer medication, and working with students' doctors and families to adjust the time when medication is administered.

What advice do you have for other support employees facing the same problems employees in Illinois faced?
I would recommend ESP members actively attempt to bargain language that prohibits them from having to dispense medication. It may be appropriate to get community members involved since they're often unaware that there's often only one nurse for the whole district.

I'd also recommend that support staff get their facts together about ESP dispensing medicine so they can make a good case to the state legislature about the need for more nurses. Finally, I'd advise ESP members to forge alliances with school nurses to make their point that the current system of dispensing medicine is not working.

For your own peace of mind, don't wait until a child is injured to bring up this issue with your community, at the bargaining table, and in the legislature. And while you're fighting for permanent change, get trained in how to handle emergencies.

WHAT WE

WANT

Due Process Overdue

"On the last day of school last year," Gwinnett County bus driver Debbie Moore recalls, "10 drivers got letters saying they were terminated. One of them had been driving for 23 years."

Thousands of school support staff across the country are "at-will" employees. Any time a supervisor or administrator decides to fire them, they're gone.

They don't have the legal right to due process (see box). They don't have tenure, like teachers, who can be fired only for specified reasons. They don't have written guarantees that they'll be employed from September to June or from year to year.

In other words, they don't have any job security.

Across the nation, state and local Associations are pushing for state laws and local contracts that protect school support staff from arbitrary dismissal.

As any Georgia support employee will tell you, it's an uphill battle.

Most of Georgia's 35,000 education support staff, like so many of their colleagues around this country, are "at-will' employees. This year the Georgia Association of Educators set out on what looks like a long road to getting them real job security.

"We want a written contract with due process," says Gwinnett bus driver Debbie Moore. "But we need it guaranteed on the state level—it's a statewide problem."

Last winter GAE backed an ESP contract bill in the state legislature. The bill required school boards to give support employees annual written contracts and to notify them by April 15 whether they'd be employed the next fall. It protected them from discharge during the year without due process.

The first subcommittee that examined the bill approved it. But the chair of the House Education Committee killed it by refusing to schedule it for discussion.

"I and others," said the chair, "fear this is another step towards collective bargaining."

Georgia school support staff feel strongly about the protection the bill promised.

"No employee wants to come to work not knowing whether he has a job," says Augusta school carpenter Adam Flono. "Teachers and paraprofessionals get a written contract every year, but if we go to work tomorrow and the district decides to fire all of us, they legally can.

"We think we should have the same consideration as teachers."

"We chased the chair of the Education Committee all around the state capitol," recalls bus driver Frankie Bryant, who went to Atlanta to lobby for the bill last winter. "When we finally pinned him down, he told us the contract bill would cost too much.

"I said, How much? He said, $3 million.

"I said, For what? He had no answer.

"I said, Some of the people who voted for you are school bus drivers and janitors and cafeteria workers, and they would like to know they have a job from year to year. He said, I've got to go."

That legislator—and others like him—may run, but they can't hide. The push for the contract bill has mobilized Georgia's school support staff, says Augusta carpenter Adam Flono.

"It's like a light turned on. We're ready to go," Flono says. "If it takes us three

Chris Kirby

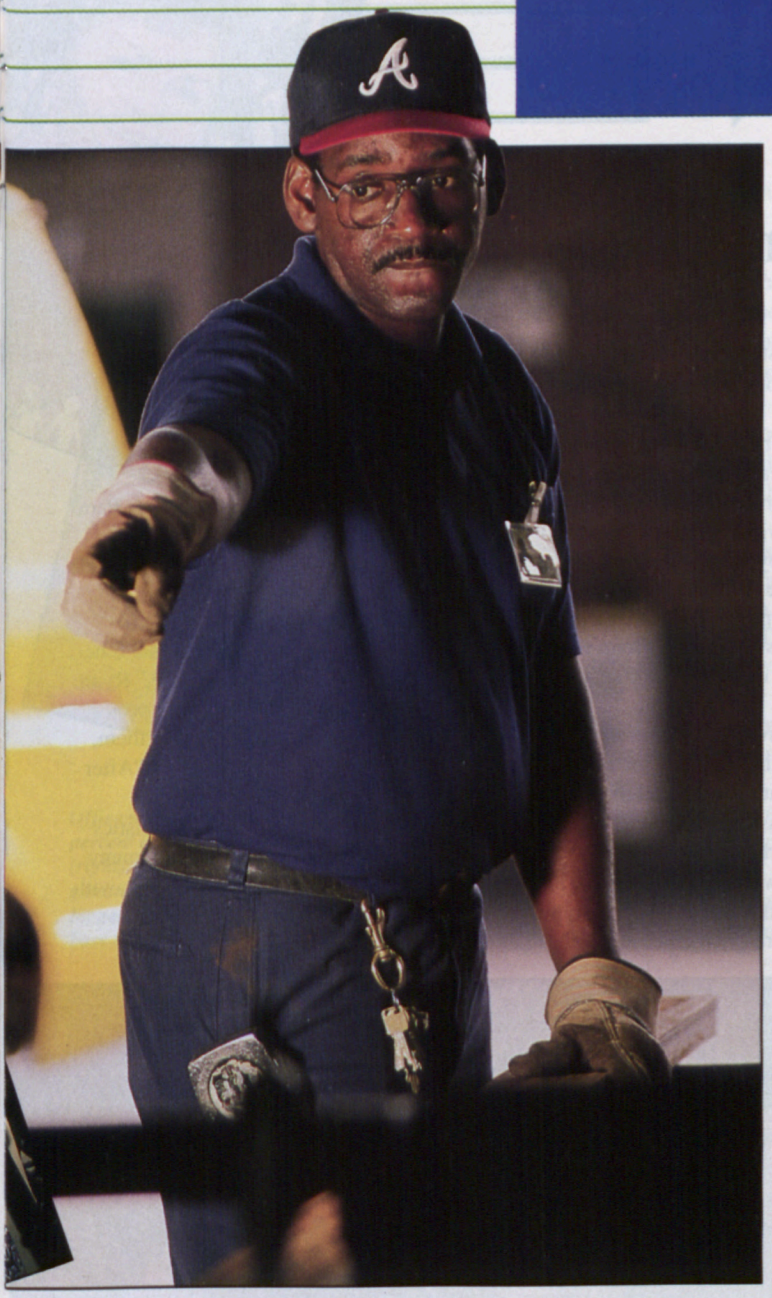
Georgia bus drivers Debbie Moore (above, center) and Frankie Bryant (below) keep pushing for job security.

Seven Tests of Due Process

If you can answer yes to each of these questions, your due process rights are adequately protected.

1. *Written grounds.* Do you and your Association get the grounds for any discipline in writing?
2. *Representation.* Can you have an Association representative at any meeting that might result in discipline?
3. *Notice of rights.* Must you be informed of the right to representation before any disciplinary action is taken against you?
4. *Appropriateness.* Is discipline required to be appropriate to the action precipitating it?
5. *Notice of complaint.* Must your employer have a signed statement from you that you've been notified of a complaint about you by a parent, student, or other person before basing any disciplinary action on that complaint?
6. *Privacy.* Is all criticism of you required to be private and confidential?
7. *Time limits.* Is disciplinary action more than a year old barred from consideration in relation to a new and different offense?

—Based on interviews with NEA contract specialists



Blake Madden

"We're all qualified professionals," says Augusta school carpenter Adam Flono, "and we should be treated as such."

years to get that bill up again, we'll invest three years to do it."

➤ One vote counted—the wrong way—in the 1992 Arizona legislature. A bill requiring school districts to provide a hearing before terminating employees passed the senate. When it came up in the house, the representative whose vote would have passed it was nowhere to be found.

➤ Until they bargained their new contract last fall, school support employees in Bernalillo, New Mexico, could be discharged on 10 days notice. Now they have the same due process rights the state law gives teachers.

After the third year on the job, they can't be discharged unless the district can show just cause for doing so. In the first three years on the job, they can be laid off only at the end of each year's contract.

Almost Heaven (Wait Till Next Year)

This spring, freshman state representative—and elementary teacher—Ima Lee Wells shepherded a contract bill for school support staff through the New Mexico legislature and onto the governor's desk. The governor vetoed the bill. But Rep. Wells, NEA-New Mexico's past president, says that won't happen again.

How did this bill get started?
In 1991, we got a bill introduced giving school employees due process rights. Teachers had had this right until 1986, when a conservative legislature took it away. Right at the start, a legislative committee cut support employees out of the bill, although the legislature then passed the version providing teachers due process for termination and discharge.

So how did you get ESP due process rights through this time?
Some of the legislators had worked very closely with us on the 1991 bill. And the legislature we have now is very much for the little people. All state employees have due process rights. Why shouldn't the custodian who keeps a school clean have the same due process as the one who keeps the statehouse clean?

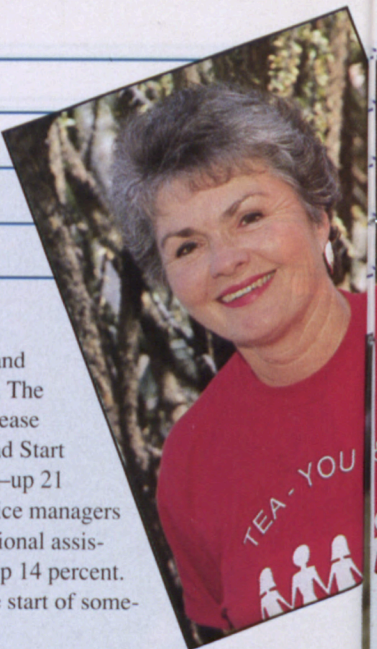
Who was your opposition, and what arguments did they use?
The school boards and administrators organizations lobbied heavily against our bill. They insisted it would cost a lot of money.

How did you answer that?
We pointed out that 60 percent of school employees—the teachers—had had these rights for two years now and it wasn't expensive, so why would it be for the 30 percent who are ESP? Besides, there's a three-year probation before an employee gets this right. If an employee who's not doing the job completes that period without improving, that's the supervisor's fault. And even with just cause and due process, an employee who's truly ineffective can be fired.

What's your next move?
To try again. We've already spoken to the governor. He said his problem with the bill was just technical. Since the bill he vetoed wasn't going to take effect until 1994 anyway, if a bill passes early next year, no real harm will have been done.

How did a teacher and Association leader like you get elected to the Legislature?
I ran on my experience in education, while my opponent ran a negative campaign. My district includes the University of New Mexico, so my record was in my favor.

Pay Equity: Is It Breakthrough Time?



Here's the evidence for a breakthrough this year in school districts' acceptance of pay equity.

★ In Arizona, the Tucson Education Association bargained a pay equity provision that upgraded the job classifications of 80 percent of the district's 1,200 white collar and food service employees.

Nearly 1,000 employees, almost all of them women, got pay increases of at least 10 percent; some, as much as 37.5 percent.

"New board members changed the situation," explains office manager Billie Fugate, cochair with Andrea Haber of TEA's Pay Equity Campaign. "We endorsed two candidates in the November 1992 election. Both won, and we ended up with three of the five board members on our side."

★ In Orange County, Florida, the Orange Educational Support Association got the school district to agree to complete an NEA Pay Equity project it started in 1988.

In a collective bargaining agreement ratified early this year, the Orange County school district committed itself to surveying and reclassifying the jobs of its 6,500 ESP employees by the end of 1994.

It also set aside $300,000 to be used solely for the purpose of adjusting the salaries of the first employee group to be reclassified—the district's 1,300 secretaries and clerks.

★ Given the progress in Tucson and Orlando, the 1991 pay equity victory by the Seattle Education Association (SEA) begins to look less like an isolated event, more like the start of a trend.

In the Seattle win—also in an NEA Pay Equity project—the jobs of SEA's paraprofessional and secretary members were revaluated and reclassified. The biggest increase went to Head Start instructors—up 21 percent; office managers and instructional assistants were up 14 percent.

Is this the start of something big?

"It's certainly a positive sign," says Pam Ryan, manager of the NEA Pay Equity Program, "that school district officials are more accepting of the job classification system NEA developed.

"When officials look around at the other job classification systems available," Ryan adds, "I think the NEA Pay Equity program ends up looking very good to them.

"That makes sense," notes Ryan. "After all, the NEA system was designed to reward precisely those job characteristics school officials themselves value in many support positions—the ability to work with children and the ability to operate in an education setting."

Ed McCain

Members of the Tucson Education Association's Pay Equity Committee (and then-TEA President Marilyn Freed, at left) beam after TEA bargained job upgrades—based on the committee's work—for nearly 1,000 of their members.

FAIR TREATMENT

Office manager Billie Fugate (left) got a 10 percent increase herself, while Terrie Sandoval (right), a community representative and bargaining committee member, got 18 percent. The biggest increase went to tutor advisers, whose base salaries went up 37.5 percent.

When those responsibilities are recognized, big changes occur.

"We eliminated gender discrimination in Tucson," explains Billie Fugate, cochair of the Tucson Education Association pay equity team. "A teaching aide, for example, is now equivalent to a school custodian in pay."

For Terrie Sandoval, a community representative for K-6 and handicapped students, the reclassification has meant an 18 percent pay increase.

"I recruit parents as classroom volunteers, train them, advise them on social services—even drive them to the services," Sandoval explains. "Plus I'm bilingual. The reclassification finally recognized these skills."

Interestingly, pay equity gains parallel the shift from top-down to site-based decision-making.

"Priorities in pay are moving away from central office positions and toward school building-based positions," explains purchasing clerk Gail Johnston, a member of the Seattle Education Association's pay equity committee.

"Before, there were no office managers in the schools. Now many school secretaries have been upgraded to office managers and given a 14 percent pay increase."

Resources

✔ The brochure *Fair Pay, We're Worth It!* and a video, *The NEA Job Evaluation System*, are available from the NEA Pay Equity Project, NEA Human and Civil Rights, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, FAX 202/822-7578.

✔ Single copies of "Briefing Paper on the Wage Gap" and "Fact Sheet on the Wage Gap" are available free from the National Committee on Pay Equity, Suite 411, 1126 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, 202/331-7343; FAX 202/331-7406.

✔ If your local Association is interested in pursuing a pay equity project, please contact your state Association or NEA regional office.

'Carpe Diem'

Something new—like a new superintendent—can create the opportunity for progress on an Association issue—like pay equity for support staff—that was never possible before.

"When that happens, a local should take the advice of the ancient Romans and 'carpe diem,'" says Dee Simmons, special education assistant and outgoing president of Washington State's Educational Support Personnel of Clover Park (ESPCP).

How did ESPCP "seize the day"?
We seized an opportunity presented to us by the report of a community review board. Because two capital levies had failed, our new superintendent created the review board to plumb community attitudes toward the schools.

One of the problems the review board reported was poor relationships between the district and support staff. We used that finding as a lever for getting the school district to cosponsor an NEA Pay Equity Project.

What did you do first?
Two years ago we bargained the terms of the study into our contract. I think the board was willing to do it because of the review board report and because it realized that ESP job descriptions were out of kilter and that staff involvement was necessary to fix them up.

A joint committee—four people from the Association, four from the district—is overseeing the project. I'm on full-time release as manager of the study. That shows the degree of cooperation.

How far have you gotten?
We've just finished the data collection phase. The next step will be getting the job descriptions coded and ranked, then bargaining the new rankings into the salary schedule.

Dick Baldwin

When will that take place?
Next year, we hope.

How do your members feel about the project?
The member response has been tremendous. In fact, the project has been primarily responsible for more than doubling Association membership—from 200 to 457—in the last two years.

We have agency shop. When the nonmember fee payers saw Association members trained as facilitators and recorders working with the district on the pay equity project, they saw positive movement they wanted to be a part of.

WHAT WE WANT

Better Skills—Better Schools

When administrators in your district think professional development, do they think teachers—and only teachers?

If so, you're not alone. Support employees nationwide say their professional development n
eeds are too often ignored. They say more in-service training would help them do their jobs better—and, as a result, boost education quality for the students they work with.

Members of the Chariho (Rhode Island) Education Support Personnel Association are proving the point. Their new contract guarantees that when teachers have professional days, support staff will, too.

"When we sat down to bargain, getting our members the training they wanted was a top priority," says Rodney Tyler, CESPA president and maintenance supervisor.

"Whether it's working with new chemicals, learning to identify behavioral disorders, or advancing word processing skills," says Tyler, "in-service training is critical to our work as professionals."

Today, the Chariho staff have three full days and two half days of training each year. The in-service days include a variety of work-related classes on topics ranging from clean-up regulations to classroom management.

"We have a committee that designs the training to meet the needs identified by staff in each building," explains Tyler. "That way everyone has a say in the process."

The training even includes joint sessions with teachers designed to reduce tensions that come from misunderstandings or miscommunication.

"These sessions have been particularly helpful," says Marie Glass, an instructional aide who serves on the committee, "because support staff and teachers now see themselves as team members working together for the students."

Equally important, school support staff are finally recognized for their role in creating a learning environment and for their commitment to professionalism.

"We care about the work we do," says Glass. "Too often, people have had to learn on the job because in-service training wasn't available. Yet we're an important part of the school environment. As professionals, we have the right to strengthen our skills."

"Every one of us plays a critical role in a child's development," adds Tyler. "As professionals, we strive to find ways to do the best job possible. When we do, everyone benefits. That's what it's all about, and that's why this contract clause is so important."

Chariho isn't the only place where professional development is a top priority.

➤ In Spokane, Washington, NEA support members bargained for annual stipends for the degrees, certificates, and in-service training they've completed.

NEA member and custodian Sue Palmer now has access to a wide range of in-service classes, thanks to her new contract.

Photographs by Kris Craig

A Different Kind Of Menu Planning

Jeff Machtig

Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin, cafeteria worker Mary Glomski isn't just participating in her district's training for support staff. She's planning it, right down to the minute.

How did your professional development series get started?

In my case, the district's administrator contacted field representatives from each of the district's four schools, asked us if we were interested, and then said, "It's all yours. Get together and start planning."

Last year was our first year of training, and people are asking for more.

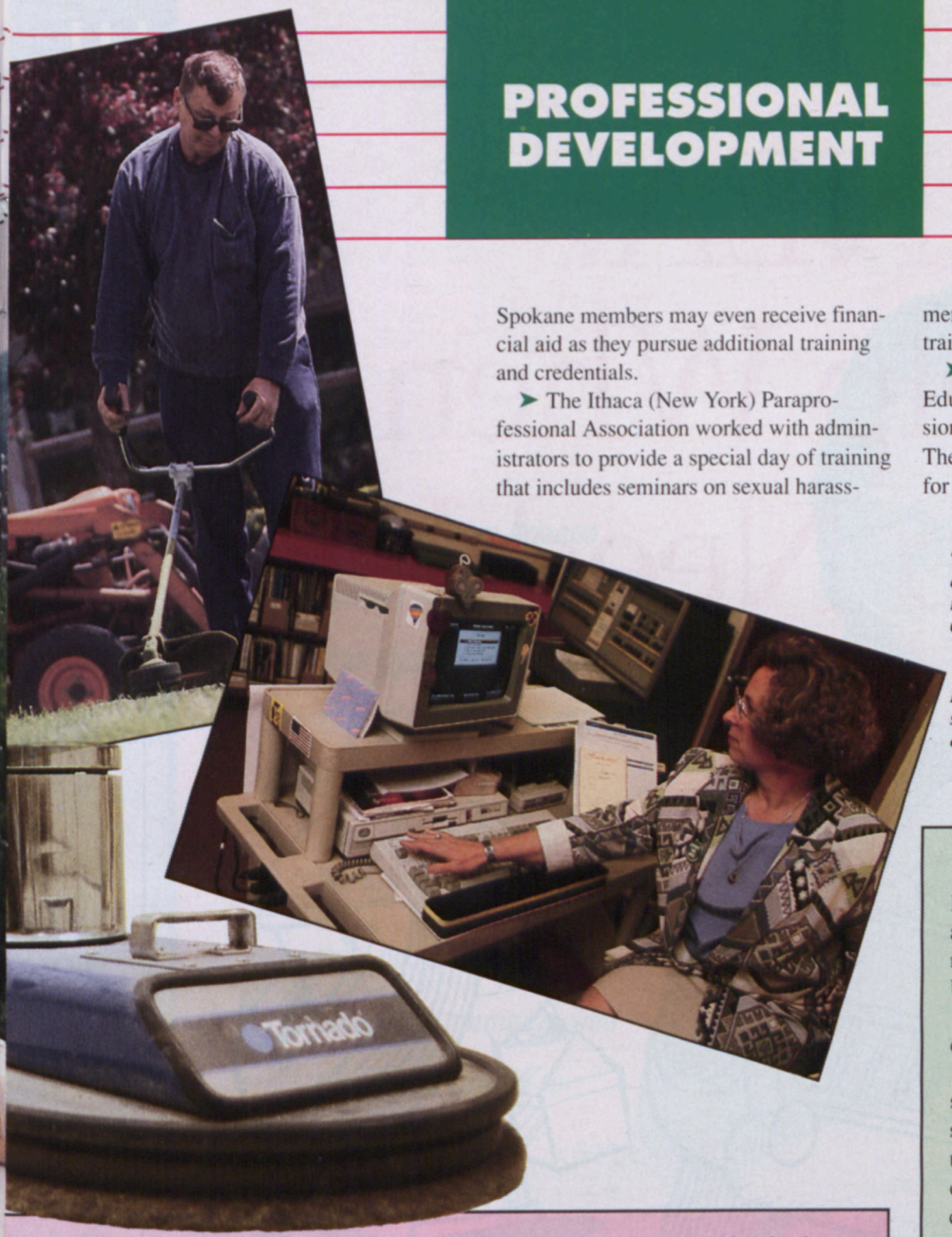
How do you choose your topics?

For the first year of training, we came up with as many ideas as we could—personal and professional—then prioritized them.

We covered a whole range of topics, from computer training to telephone skills to handling difficult students. Our most popular workshop was on communication styles.

This year, we're planning to distribute a survey to employees at the district's four schools to find out what kind of

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Spokane members may even receive financial aid as they pursue additional training and credentials.

➤ The Ithaca (New York) Paraprofessional Association worked with administrators to provide a special day of training that includes seminars on sexual harassment, time management, and assertiveness training.

➤ The Billings (Montana) Classified Education Association bargained a provision for a staff development committee. The committee's charge: to plan in-service for classified employees districtwide.

"Everyone of us plays a critical role in a child's development," says Rodney Tyler, maintenance worker and president of Chariho ESP.

Like all members of Chariho ESP, school secretary Janice Gough now gets four days of paid training each year.

training opportunities they want.

When do you hold the workshops?
We offer them throughout the year—it varies according to the availability of speakers. Last year we held six workshops and offered each one twice— from 11:30 to 12:30 and 1:30 to 2:30—so everyone had a chance to attend.

We even held a workshop on retirement one evening and invited all public employees to attend. That session was packed.

Where do you get your speakers?
Most of the time, the speakers come from within the district, but eventually we'll have a small stipend to bring in outside speakers as well. We're planning to ask some of the teachers to get involved, too

Do you think the in-service workshops make a difference?
Absolutely. For the first time, school support staff have the opportunity to work on their writing skills, learn better ways of listening and communicating, and tackle the changing demands of their work. That does wonders for self-esteem and opens doors for all of us.

What do you plan to do next?
Well, we've set up a budget for more speakers and workshops, and we'll see what people ask for in our survey.

Not all sessions are well attended, but even if we help out only 10 people, I think it's worth it.

Talking Turkey

If you're getting ready to talk with your administrators about professional development, here are some tips from Rhode Island UniServ Director Gail Colburn-Moniz.

✔ Make your language (bargaining or otherwise) clear.

The CESPA contract specifies that the school district will provide training for school support staff on release days scheduled throughout the year, pay for all speakers, reimburse employees who successfully complete certain courses, and allow employees to attend adult education classes tuition-free if space permits.

✔ Make sure members are involved in the planning. Besides giving you some ownership of the program, that also sends a clear message to the administration that you're serious about the training.

✔ Find speakers who are engaging—who hold participants' interest.

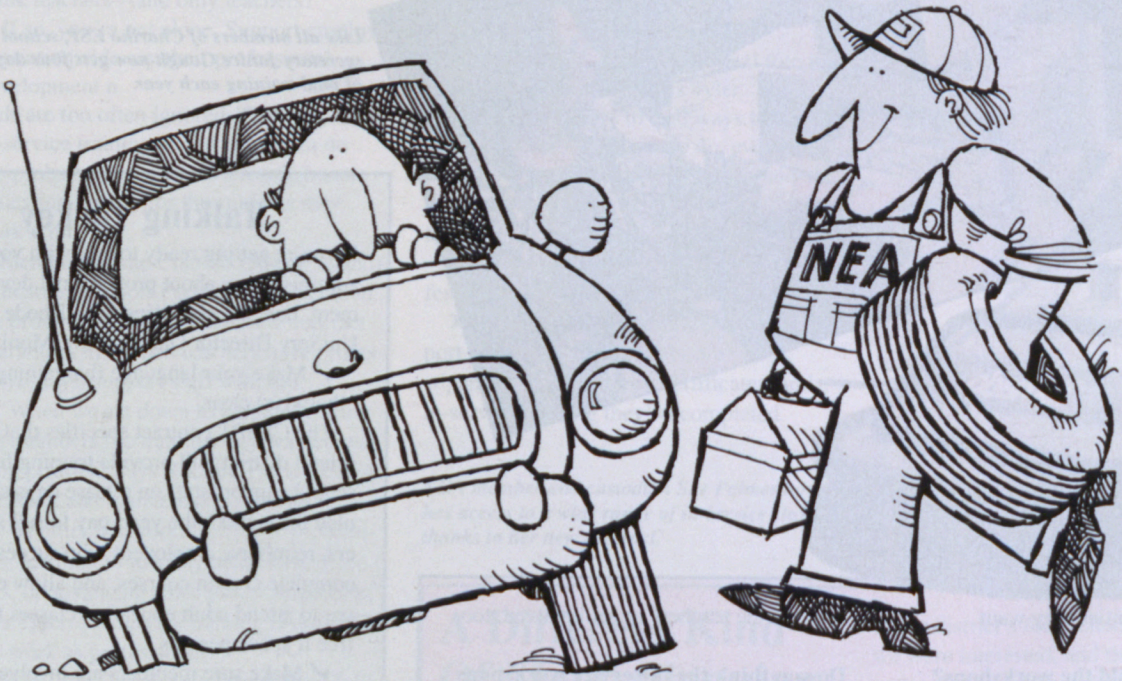
✔ Provide materials and resources that members can use once the training is complete.

✔ Make sure the topics are relevant to all employees, regardless of job category.

✔ Make sure all staff attend in-service training. "We feel it's important to have everyone attend," says Colburn-Moniz.

"We worked hard to get training into the contract; we'll do the same to make it work."

NEA: Help When You Need It



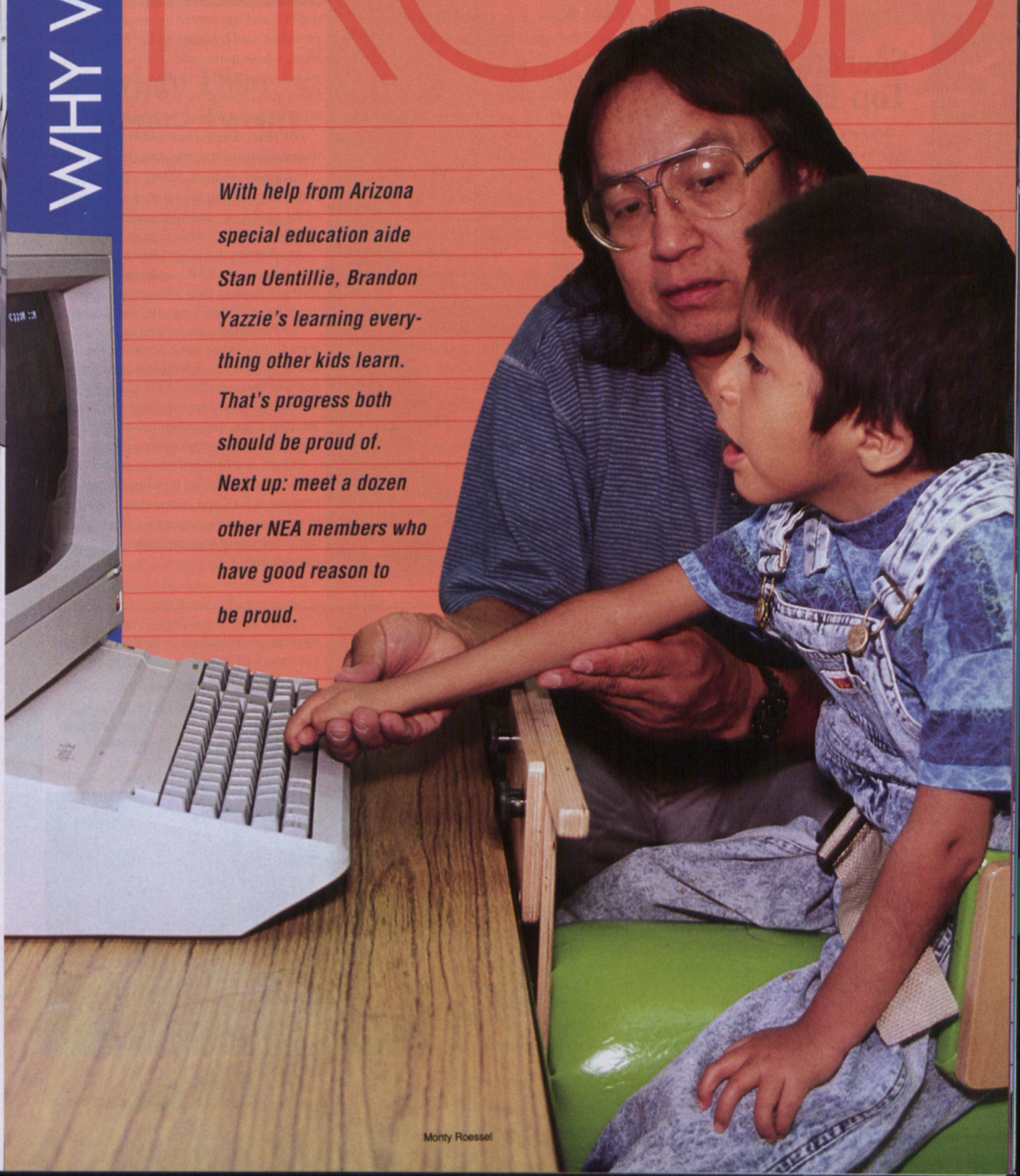
When you're an NEA member, you can count on help handling the bumps in the road. NEA's national network of experienced UniServ staff work with Association members every day to overcome the problems that confront education employees. And NEA can help you help yourself with training, research, and legal assistance. NEA's your union, helping you get where you want to go.

TOGETHER, WE MAKE EDUCATION WORK

nea
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

WHY WE'RE PROUD

With help from Arizona special education aide Stan Uentillie, Brandon Yazzie's learning everything other kids learn. That's progress both should be proud of. Next up: meet a dozen other NEA members who have good reason to be proud.



Monty Roessel

PROUD

● IN ALABAMA

Secretary Wins Top Honor

Winning the NEA Support Person of the Year Award convinced Mobile's Environmental Studies Center secretary Doris Dortch that "somewhere, someone out there appreciates me for what I've been doing."

The truth is that a lot of people in many places appreciate the thousands of hours Dortch has put in to improve the lot of education support workers.

In nominating Dortch for the award, Alabama Education Association President Callie Waldrop noted: "Doris is a knowledgeable, articulate leader. She is a mover of mountains. She goes the extra mile and inspires others to do the same."

Adds NEA ESP Committee Chair Mary Ann Smith, "She strives for excellence in working with teachers, parents, and the community. And she's dedicated to children. It shows."

Dortch was 1992-93 president of the Alabama Education Support Personnel Organization (ESPO) and has served as president, vice-president, and treasurer of her Mobile local, whose nomination for the state ESP award propelled her to the national honor. She's also chaired the ESP Caucus at NEA's Representative Assembly.

For years, Dortch has lobbied to draw national attention to the concerns of education support workers. Salary's her #1 concern. "By keeping the salary issue in front of the public, we can help make sure ESP members are paid what they're worth."

Another key issue for Dortch is in-service training for ESP members. "Too often, ESP get stuck in jobs without any opportunities for staff development," she laments.

"ESP members are treated as though we want to stay in the same positions for the rest of our lives," says Dortch. She notes that like most workers, ESP members want the flexibility to move to other positions, and they think their school districts should help train them to make those moves.

Dortch is a firm believer in support workers' potential for building bridges between school and community. "We live in the communities where we work, and we can make valuable contributions to those communities."

Bruce Graner

Doris Dortch works as a secretary at the Mobile County Public Schools Environmental Studies Center, where city kids get a close-up look at nature—both live and preserved.

● IN WYOMING

'Win-Winning'

In the space of two years, the status of Mary Kay Bonomo and 129 more of the the Green River, Wyoming, school district's 170 support staff has gone from "unrepresented" to actively involved in the Green River Education Association's two latest rounds of "interest-based" or "win-win" negotiations.

Bonomo, a veteran food service driver in the district, is now a member of the inclusive local's executive board. She's also one of GREA's win-win negotiators.

Bonomo attributes the sudden change in ESP status to two factors: new faces in the administration and the interest-based bargaining itself.

"The administration stopped making support staff think we'd lose our jobs if we joined the Association, so we took the GREA teachers up on a longstanding offer and became members.

"Then the win-win bargaining put ESP on an equal basis with administrators, school board members, and teachers. Two from each group meet every spring to put forward proposals for policy change. We decide them on the basis of fairness, equity, and cost-effectiveness," Bonomo explains.

"Only the money issues are formally negotiated and approved by the school board and the Association," she adds.

At the suggestion of the teachers, GREA's 1992 interest-based bargaining focused on ESP issues. The results: support workers got rid of an unfair incentive pay plan for food service employees, won sick leave awarded in proportion to time worked, and got vacations extended up to as many as four weeks.

Mary Kay Bonomo loads her truck with hot food for district students.

Thomas Lee

● IN DELAWARE

It's More Than Four-and-Twenty

"A hundred blackbirds could run you into real money," points out custodian Steve Hall. Hall's an expert on the subject: as a skilled amateur taxidermist, he's taught tenth grade biology students at Delaware's Indian River High School how to stuff birds.

"I'd bring in the tools, chemicals, needles, and thread to use," says Hall. "And the birds, too—one for each student.

"Blackbirds are a problem for the farmers around here," explains Hall, "and I'm a hunter. So they ask me to come around to their place and shoot the birds." Hall says he often bags more than 100 birds in a day.

Hall's taxidermy classes were optional enrichment classes, not a regular part of the high school's credit biology course. Hall demonstrated the techniques of stuffing a bird. ("It doesn't matter," he says, "whether it's a blackbird or an elephant. The methods are the same.") Afterwards, Hall stayed after school to give students a chance to finish their projects.

The classes were regular events until a few years ago, when Hall's partner, biology teacher Jim Hudson, moved on to another school.

Custodian Steve Hall, who doubles as an amateur taxidermist, stands by a collection of his finest.

Gary Emeigh

WHY WE'RE

PROUD

● IN IOWA

Taking Charge Of Fort Dodge

It's no longer politics as usual in Fort Dodge—not when two of the seven members of the City Council are school employees and Association activists.

Jane Burleson, a teacher associate at Fort Dodge Senior High, has been on the Council for 10 years. Ron Campbell, a custodian at Iowa Central Community College and president of his local Association, was elected for the first time last winter.

Located 100 miles north of Des Moines, Fort Dodge has a population of 26,000, a $23 million budget, and the usual range of problems, from sewers to garbage collection to tight money.

When it comes to issues of community, kids, or unions, Campbell and Burleson stick together. For instance, "recreation programs are a big priority for Jane and me," Campbell says. "This year we backed one another and voted for the recreation budget, and it passed."

Tim Hynds

Both Council members pride themselves on their people skills. "I grew up in Fort Dodge," says Campbell. "I know most of the people here, and I take care of their problems the same day they call me."

"Citizens have a chance to voice their opinions to me," Burleson notes. "I can get something done a little quicker than the big boys.

"I always tell it like it is," she adds, "and it hasn't hurt me yet."

School support workers have two voices representing them on the Fort Dodge City Council: custodian Ron Campbell and teacher associate Jane Burleson. Both are seasoned political and Association activists.

Keith Srakocic

● IN PENNSYLVANIA

Wall-to-Wall School Spirit

The 1,400 junior-senior high students in Mount Pleasant can keep up with their school's athletic teams just by keeping their eyes open in the cafeteria.

Cafeteria workers Veronica Echard and Marguerite Renshaw make sure the cafeteria walls—all four of them—always reflect the athletic seasons as well as upcoming holidays. Echard, the cafeteria's cashier, also sets out the desserts each day. Renshaw's the assistant baker.

"For each month or season, we make pictures out of paper," says Echard. "And we make signs—'Good luck, Track!' for example—to show all the teams—football, swimming, baseball, wrestling, basketball—we're behind them."

The district agreed to pay the two cafeteria workers for the time they spend designing and producing the decorations. They make extra seasonal decorations to send to the elementary schools. "This spring, for instance, we sent out extra paper rabbits," notes Echard.

The cafeteria's traditional end-of-year display seems to have a special meaning for some students—the graduating seniors. Made up of symbols like mortarboard caps and diplomas, it's come to be a sought-after keepsake of the high school years.

"So now we let them come in the last day and take everything away," Echard says.

When they're not working in their school cafeteria, sports boosters Veronica Echard (left) and Marguerite Renshaw sell tickets to Mount Pleasant Junior-Senior High School wrestling matches and take tickets at football games.

● IN ALABAMA

Home on the Range

Roe Hughes has got a beef—literally.

An operations and maintenance worker at Northwest Alabama Community College and president of his local, Hughes is a director of the Franklin County Cattlemen's Association. The organization's goal: to raise beef and promote its consumption.

As a third-generation cattle farmer, Hughes thinks nutrition gurus are wrong to recommend less beef consumption. And, with 132 head of cattle and 800 acres, he's not leaving their position unchallenged.

"We don't give any mind to these arguments," Hughes says. "Beef is needed to balance out the system."

The Cattlemen's Association, in tandem with Auburn University and Mississippi State University, is getting the latest research on the role of red meat in the diet, says Hughes. What's more, the Cattlemen's Association is studying the use of steroid-free grain and the breeding of lower-fat beef.

Hughes takes his own argument to heart by enjoying hearty steak dinners on a regular basis.

When he's not keeping the Northwest Alabama Community College running, Roe Hughes is home on the range—feeding his cattle and tending his 800-acre ranch.

Rod Whited

● IN ILLINOIS

She Gives Kids A 'Safe Haven'

Every evening from 5 to 8, you can find Springfield teacher associate Irma Lott and 50 or 60 kids in a safe place—a safe haven, to be exact.

Located amid three housing projects in a high-crime neighborhood, Safe Haven is an after-school program Lott directs. In addition to help with homework, Safe Haven gives neighborhood third to twelfth graders a chance to participate in activities from bowling to gardening to community service.

"Kids have a real need for a place they can go in the evenings," Lott says. "We're busy from 5 o'clock on. We have to literally push the kids out the door at 8."

Every night from 5 to 6, the students who show up at Safe Haven must check in, then do homework. "That's the key to get in the door," Lott says. When they're done, they're free to enjoy arts and crafts, photography, aerobics, scouting, skating, even reading to the elderly.

Housed in the Withrow Early Childhood Center, the program is funded by a federal grant and staffed by Lott, two other paid workers, four teenage mentors, and a raft of volunteers.

Lott's proudest moment came when 27 of the students who frequent Safe Haven made the honor roll at their schools. "I've seen a lot of the kids really mature and pull up their grades," Lott says. "Many of them had given up on themselves—and now they're honor roll students. That's really rewarding."

Judy Lutz-Spencer

Paraprofessional Irma Lott (right) works with two students in an after-school program called Safe Haven. Lott's also a founding member of the newly organized Springfield Education Association.

Richard Hallberg

Phoebe Forbes displays a gown that dates back to the Civil War.

● IN NEW YORK

Stitches in Time

When senior accounting clerk typist Phoebe Forbes isn't in the office, she's very much at home—in a 150-year-old local mansion.

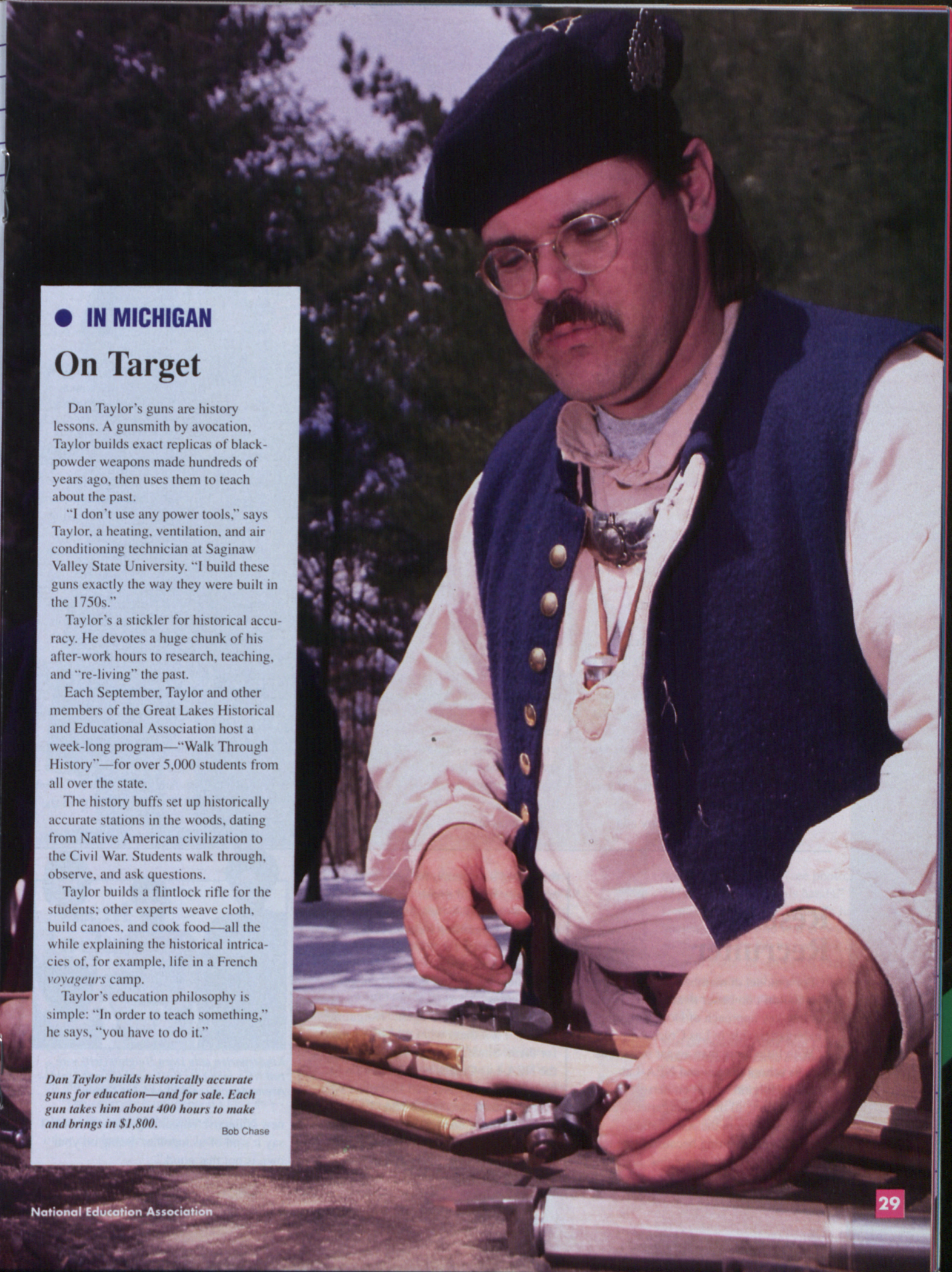
Forbes, who works in the business office of Jamestown Community College, is textile curator of the Fenton Historical Society, a local history group that's made a museum from the 1850s villa of Civil War-era governor Reuben Fenton. The museum receives some 18,000 visitors a year.

"As textile curator," Forbes explains, "I catalog the collection, do research, and work closely with the head curator, who puts up the exhibits. I do a lot of reading to find out about what our textiles are and how to treat them."

Forbes says new donations keep coming in: "We take mostly things that belonged to people in Jamestown or were worn by people in Jamestown. We might take something else just because it's from that period, if it's especially interesting. Now we're also starting to collect local T-shirts."

Forbes' daughter got her interested in the museum about 15 years ago. Forbes worked with the Junior Historians, a girls' club the museum sponsored. The specialization took shape when Forbes did a college independent study project in textiles.

The century-old villa hasn't given up all its secrets. "We're not sure what some rooms were for," Forbes acknowledges. "And we're always making discoveries. When we sanded the paint off the drawing room walls, we found pictures stenciled underneath."



● **IN MICHIGAN**

On Target

Dan Taylor's guns are history lessons. A gunsmith by avocation, Taylor builds exact replicas of black-powder weapons made hundreds of years ago, then uses them to teach about the past.

"I don't use any power tools," says Taylor, a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning technician at Saginaw Valley State University. "I build these guns exactly the way they were built in the 1750s."

Taylor's a stickler for historical accuracy. He devotes a huge chunk of his after-work hours to research, teaching, and "re-living" the past.

Each September, Taylor and other members of the Great Lakes Historical and Educational Association host a week-long program—"Walk Through History"—for over 5,000 students from all over the state.

The history buffs set up historically accurate stations in the woods, dating from Native American civilization to the Civil War. Students walk through, observe, and ask questions.

Taylor builds a flintlock rifle for the students; other experts weave cloth, build canoes, and cook food—all the while explaining the historical intricacies of, for example, life in a French *voyageurs* camp.

Taylor's education philosophy is simple: "In order to teach something," he says, "you have to do it."

Dan Taylor builds historically accurate guns for education—and for sale. Each gun takes him about 400 hours to make and brings in $1,800.

Bob Chase

PROUD

Sharon and The Bee

School bus drivers have long been involved in promoting bus safety. Here's the story of several NEA members who go the extra mile to make that job fun.

Mike Munden

Jim Decker

Left, twins Sharon (left) and Barbara Bennett, with Sharon the talking bus. Inset, Charlene Sanders drives her bus and, above, dons her bee costume.

● IN OHIO

To the children of Lexington, Ohio, Sharon Bennett has two personalities—she's a bus driver and a bus. (The talking cartoon bus she uses to push bus safety is also named Sharon.) "That's okay with me," laughs Bennett, "as long as they learn from both of us."

Together, Bennett and twin sister Barbara, a school transportation coordinator in nearby Morrow County, teach children in grades K-3 everything they need to know about safety. Their mission: "To help children follow rules that will keep them from getting hurt or even killed," says the veteran driver.

"Children don't realize there are danger zones around buses where cars or even the bus driver can't see a child run out or bend over to pick something up.

"Seeing a character they enjoy and understand helps them remember the rules that will keep them alive and safe," says Bennett.

● IN NEVADA

That's the Bee's purpose, too. Kids don't always to listen to what adults say about safety. But they take notice when the message comes from a giant, friendly bee.

So 11 Clark County, Nevada, bus drivers, driver trainers, and safety patrol workers, along with three administrators—and financial support from the Nevada State Education Association—created Buster Bee.

The mascot's message is "Bee Safe, Bee Smart, Bee Careful." Driver Charlene Sanders and safety patrol worker Theresa Hannigan take turns wearing the Buster Bee costume to shopping malls, Head Start classes, and elementary schools.

It's hot inside the bee costume, notes Saunders, but events on the outside take her mind off the discomfort.

"The kids inevitably touch the costume," she says, "and sometimes they get carried away. Once a child actually pulled off the stingers and wings. And kids always want to know if the bee is a girl or a boy."

On a more serious note, Sanders says the "creative approach to get our message across is working. And a side benefit is that it's giving support workers visibility in the community."

● IN NEW MEXICO

Resolute Recruiter

For a model of membership recruiting, you couldn't do better than the persistent but low-key approach of Dora Holguin, kindergarten aide in Las Cruces.

With little more than a year in the Las Cruces school district and NEA-Las Cruces, Holguin took it on herself to get people—first, all the kindergarten teachers and aides—to join the Association.

"I do this recruiting because I like to talk about NEA," Holguin explains. She finds the school's reception for new teachers an especially fruitful event.

"Now that NEA-New Mexico has won collective bargaining rights for all public employees, I tell them things are looking better. It's best, I say, to be in an organization where people are moving and getting things going.

"If the people seem open," Holguin continues, "I ask them what the NEA can do for them. Since I'm an at-large member of the NEA-Las Cruces board, I say I will have a board member call to answer whatever questions they have. Then I ask them to call me back and let me know how the conversation went.

"People are very interested in how the new collective bargaining law will work. I say it's all of us together. Being on your own is not that good."

Patti Longmire

Kindergarten aide Dora Holguin (left) with two NEA members she brought into the fold—Avone Arnold (center) and Jan Brown.

● IN ARIZONA

Agent of Inclusion

Stan Uentillie plays a key role in making "inclusion" work for the six severely disabled children recently enrolled in his school. Uentillie is a special education aide at Kayenta Primary School near Monument Valley on the Navajo reservation.

"The severely handicapped kids can't always do exactly the same thing the other children are doing," Uentillie explains, "but they can do something similar—such as work on holding onto a pen when the other kids are writing."

Without inclusion—the policy of educating severely handicapped youngsters along with everyone else rather than by themselves—such children would never be in a regular classroom.

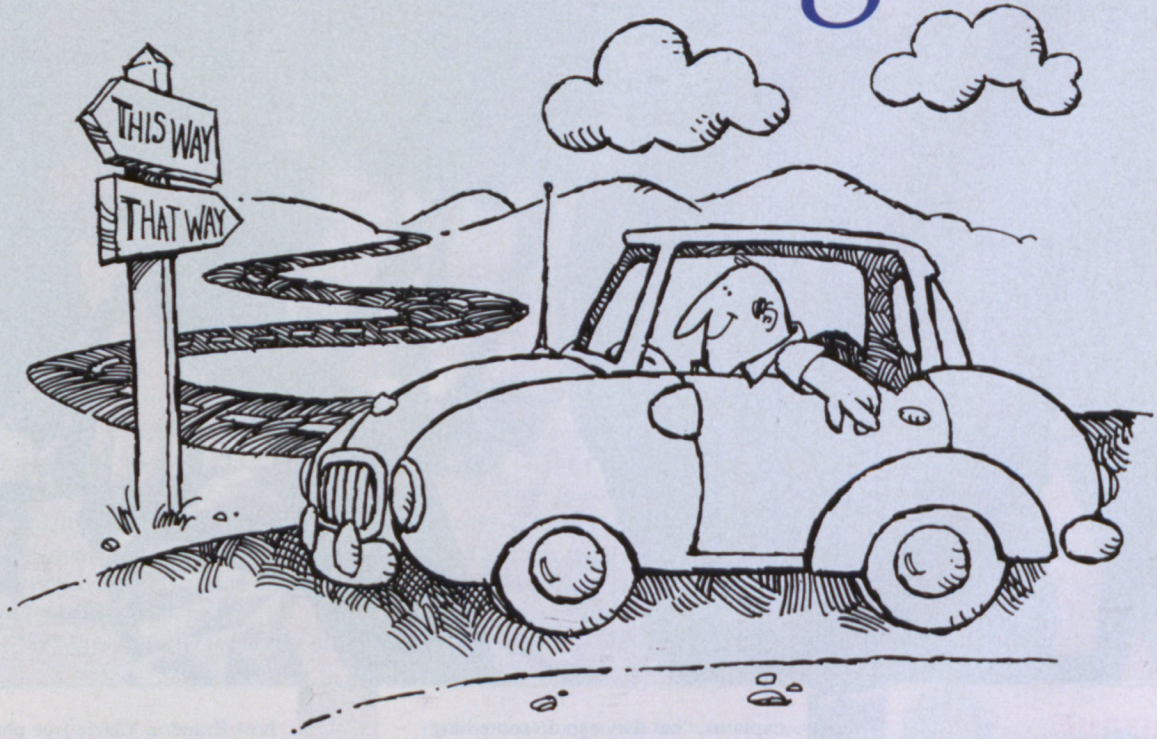
Uentillie supervises exercises prescribed by physical therapists for the disabled children. "Michelle Luna didn't walk when I started working with her; now she does," he observes. "The growth is tremendous."

He also enlists other students to help their handicapped classmates. "That's how Brandon Yazzie [see photo, page 23] learned to move his hands," Uentillie says. "Now Brandon has a nucleus of kids who will go with him all the way through this school. A 'circle of friends' develops for each special needs student, and we keep them together through the elementary grades."

Special education aide Stan Uentillie gives student Michelle Luna a swing. Uentillie got interested in special education when his sister, Karina—now a second grade teacher at Kayenta Primary School—became a special education teacher.

Monty Roessel

NEA: Your Chance For Change



When you're an NEA member, you're in the driver's seat. Want to head down the road to job security? Or safe workplaces? Or better wages? Or take a turn that puts you smack in the middle of community efforts to improve your public schools? Or do it all? It's all possible when you and your colleagues pull together. Whatever routes you choose, NEA's your union, helping you get where you want to go.

TOGETHER, WE MAKE EDUCATION WORK

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WHAT WE DO

Michigan cafeteria worker Nancy Zuver does it all—she bakes, cooks, serves, and rings up the total. She's smiling here, but all's not well. To find out why—and check trends in your field—turn the page.

Robert Chase

No Surprise—The Organized Are Good Organizers

When it comes to Association organizing, secretaries are naturals. Who knows better how to control the flow of paper, respond to an ever-changing array of assignments, and organize tasks into day-by-day priorities?

"Most school secretaries develop an organizational style in response to the constant stream of assignments that teachers and administrators hand over to them," says Georgia high school secretary and bookkeeper Jo Hester. "I'm not a neatnik, but there's organization to my madness."

That organization has won praise from Georgia UniServ staffer Bob Holland, who says Hester has been invaluable in organizing support members, most recently for an open hearing for ESP members at the Georgia legislature.

"Jo organized the whole event," Holland says. "She got 300 members from surrounding districts to attend the hearing."

How does Hester stay on top of the situation? To handle her frenzied days, she prepares a "to do" list organized by priorities.

Colorado school secretary Carol Medina sets her priorities by color. "I use red file folders for urgent, yellow for pending, and green for less urgent," says the past president of the Denver Association of Education Office Professionals. "That makes it easy for me to put my hands on the information I need when I need it."

Medina keeps her Association business just as organized by using three different briefcases—one each for local, state, and national Association issues.

Medina says the computer skills she's learned as a secretary stand her in good stead in the nitty-gritty work of Association organizing.

"It's no problem to input data and print mailing labels at the Association office," says Medina. "My computer skills are a real time saver."

While Medina finds it hard to keep her desk tidy all the time, her organizational methods usually help her keep track of all the paper that finds its way there. "I can generally put my hands on what I need when I need it," Medina says.

Pinellas County, Florida, secretary Mary Ann Smith says the "methodical" skills she uses in her day job come in handy in her volunteer hours as NEA ESP Caucus chair.

"You have to have a place for everything and learn to concentrate while being interrupted every three minutes, otherwise you'll be drowning in paper and lose track of things," says Smith. "It doesn't matter if you're dealing with grievances or board minutes—organizational skills are a must."

Like Smith, Wisconsin activist Joyce Jones's needs organizational skills for her Association work. As past president of the Onalaska Education Association Secretaries and Aides local, she frequently takes on the job of conference coordinator—finding speakers, ordering snacks, and lining up motels and university sites.

Her favorite task—meeting and greeting the public—requires organizational skills as well. "Whatever I promise, I make sure I follow through on it. And then, of course, I save a copy of everything I do."

Carroll County Association of Educators member Jo Hester says she's not a neatnik, but a picture's worth a thousand words.

Ellie Broom

Bob Pennell

Handling (Real) Disasters

Gail Rasmussen is primed to respond to big-scale organizational challenges. That's a help when she's working as a secretary at Oregon's Eagle Point High School. But it's a necessity in her after-hours volunteer job.

Rasmussen's coordinator of disaster relief efforts for the Rogue Valley chapter of the American Red Cross.

Last summer, when a forest fire displaced a dozen or so families in her community, Rasmussen was part of the team that set up and staffed a temporary shelter. The team also purchased the food for the shelter and kept records on the location of everyone who was evacuated.

"Our shelter was a couple of classrooms in the local high school," Rasmussen explains. "We set up cots and kept a coffee pot going all night. I had no trouble staying awake.

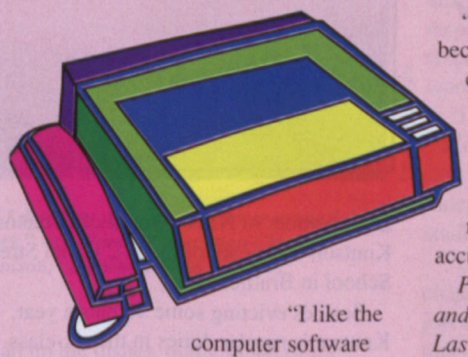
"A huge fire—over 10,000 acres—was raging just a mile south of us. From the parking lot, we could see the embers glowing on the mountainside. Fortunately, the winds shifted, and we didn't have to evacuate the evacuation center."

Rasmussen says her special interest comes naturally. "I was a military brat," she explains. "I grew up surrounded by the Red Cross, so I've always known it works in an organized way to get things done."

What's your *favorite* hi-tech office toy?

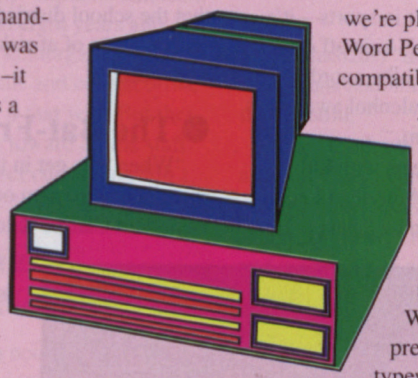
"My favorite is the fax machine, because it expedites everything. I can't believe you can just dial a phone number and send correspondence anywhere in the world. In comparison with the two days it takes to send an interoffice memo in the district, it's quite a time saver."

Jan Smith, secretary, Anne Fox Elementary School, Hanover Park, Illinois



"I like the computer software program School Master. It simplifies record keeping and everyday organizing. Before, handling attendance files was incredibly laborious –it could take as long as a week. Now I can do them in an hour."

Carol Ann Mehan, principal's secretary, Prides Corner School, Westbrook, Maine

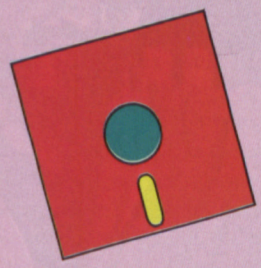


"I like the Quattro Pro program because it simplifies everything I do—I can do spread sheets for a million dollar program budget much more easily. My predecessor did it all by hand, which was terribly time-consuming and potentially inaccurate. This program is faster and more accurate."

Peggy Stiles, secretary for curriculum and instruction, Clark County Schools, Las Vegas, Nevada

"Right now I have an Apple II, but we're planning to move to Word Perfect on an IBM-compatible machine. When you're doing the number of routine form letters I do, the computer and compatible software make the job so much easier. When I think of the pre-computer days with typewriters and carbons, I realize how far we've come."

Maryann Dogostino, principal's secretary, West Deptford High School, Verga, New Jersey



The Respect Gap

Earning it and getting it can be two different things.

As often as not, school custodial and maintenance workers go far beyond their job requirements, in school and in their communities. They put a wide range of talents and skills at the service of students—and of their fellow citizens. Those they work with, and often their whole communities, hold them in high regard.

Local Hero

In rural Talbot County, Maryland, maintenance worker Oscar Cooper works with kids like the ones he sees in school.

To Talbot County children, Cooper's a hero. He even has a sports hero's nickname. "Whenever I go to a school, I hear them call out, 'Hey, Mr. Bo,' " says Cooper, who's also president of the Talbot County support staff union, MSESC-NEA.

But Cooper's fame isn't in sports—it's in keeping Talbot County's kids off drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. He's the coordinator of the district's drug and alcohol awareness and rehabilitation program.

Each week, Cooper meets with kids aged 8 to 14 at the local American Legion Hall. Together, they listen to speakers from the health department, sheriff's department, and Alcoholics Anonymous.

Then they plan dances, field trips, and other activities that keep the kids and their peers off the streets. One group of youngsters has formed a marching unit that takes part in community parades. Teams of kids periodically clean up one or another local neighborhood. They cultivate a plot in a community garden. And this year Cooper arranged for them to go to Washington for some of the Presidential Inaugural activities.

"As a recovering alcoholic, I wanted to give these kids a chance I didn't have," says Cooper. "If even three of them turn away from drugs or alcohol, I'll be happy."

Cooper must be a happy man, then: over 100 children now join him regularly. In fact, his program has become so popular that the school district's asked him to work with a group of at-risk students at the local high school.

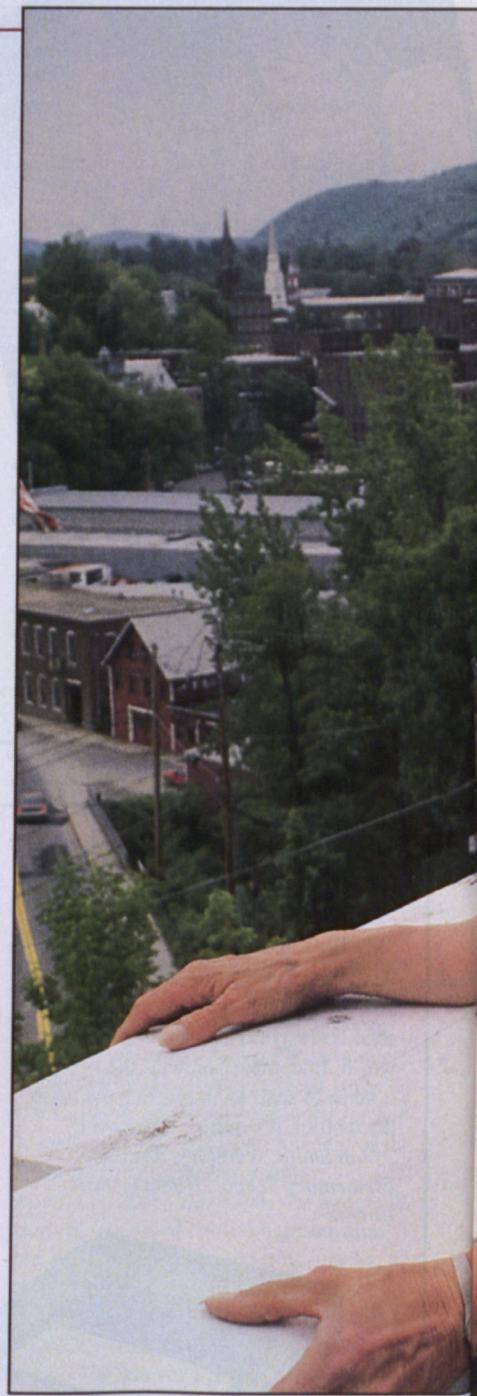
The Bat-Free Belfry

"When bats get in the school, I catch them and take them outside," says Vermont custodian Clarice Knutson. An at-large ESP member of NEA's Board of Directors, Knutson takes care of the K-2 Canal Street School in Brattleboro.

Besides evicting some 20 bats a year, Knutson's regular duties in the six-classroom school include a few tasks foreign to custodians in some larger buildings: washing windows, helping serve lunch and

Richard Nowitz

Maryland maintenance worker Oscar Cooper doesn't stop helping kids at the door of the school, or the end of the week.



David Burroughs

"If I don't get up to the bell tower to wind the clock," says Vermont custodian Clarice Knutson, "the whole town knows it."

clean up the dishes, doing much of the plumbing and electrical repair, and winding the clock in the belltower every third day.

"I like being able to do a little extra to make this a nicer place for the teachers and students," says Knutson. "Things custodians don't normally have time for, like making a new chicken brooder out of a cardboard box."

All that plus keeping the building clean and handling the inevitable "things no one else would do."

Kenyon Kopp

Maintenance and custodial workers know their work's important, says Missouri custodian Lee Austin, who wishes everybody else did.

"In our town, the other school staff—the paras and teachers, for example—look on us as part of the same educational team," explains Knutson, who came to education eight years ago as a volunteer in her son's kindergarten class.

"Not all the principals and central office administrators look at it that way. But they have the same attitude toward all the staff. Those who don't respect custodians don't respect teachers either."

Versatile? Yes. Doormat? No.

But more often than not, gifted and bighearted school employees don't get the respect that's due them as skilled and responsible workers. In fact, extra competence often just brings extra demands.

"I've always believed that because I'm a custodian, I'm in the field of education," says Lee Austin, president of Missouri's Independence ESP. "We take part in the students' education in our own way.

"Our purpose is to provide a healthy, clean environment for learning. That's our job. If we can throw in some extras to help, that's fine."

But Austin notes that on the job, helping out can become an occupational hazard. Some teachers and administrators (not all, he emphasizes) "don't respect the custodians and maintenance workers as they should.

"They think we're at everyone's beck and call," says Austin, "and they don't mind asking favors."

Strange items creep into the custodial and maintenance agenda, say Austin and his colleagues. A short list includes repairing shoes (or washing machines), locksmithing, watching classes, operating theatre lights during hours scheduled for cleaning the building (or on personal time), retrieving used lunch trays from the teachers lounge, sorting silverware, and hunting through dumpsters for valuable objects—like dental braces and glasses—students leave on their lunch trays.

Things haven't always been this way, Austin recalls. "When I started, in the '60s, teachers picked up any papers that were strewn around, closed the windows, and shut the blinds before they went home each day.

"But now," notes Austin, "whatever happens, they say: 'Don't worry about it. The custodian will take care of it.' "

WHAT WE DO

A Bridge Between Cultures

"Working with children who are new to America brings back a lot of memories," says Virginia teacher aide Sangthong Naraporn. "I know just how they feel...shy, afraid, lonely, unsure of themselves. I can really relate to them."

Naraporn came to this country from Thailand 24 years ago as a college student. Although she'd studied English for several years, she found that her formal training hadn't prepared her for conversation.

"The word 'hi' wasn't in my vocabulary, and I thought a 'restroom' was a place to rest," says Naraporn. "I'm basically a shy person, and I hesitated to speak English because I worried that people might laugh at me if I said something that wasn't just right."

Today Naraporn helps to ease children's transition to the English language and American culture. Like many other paraprofessionals in today's changing classrooms, she acts as a bridge between a child's home country and new home.

The language barrier can be the toughest nut to crack, says Moeun Kang, a Cambodian native who works with elementary school youngsters in Seattle, Washington.

"For a long time, you get no response. It's like talking to an elephant," he says. But patience pays off, Kang says. After about three months, there's usually a breakthrough—first in language, then in social skills.

Naraporn agrees. "It's important to let these kids progress socially and linguistically at their own pace," she says. "Because their comprehension level advances much more quickly than their speaking ability, you're often not aware of how much they understand. Also, the children usually don't have the confidence to try to speak in English."

Between 1979 and 1989, the total number of children 8 to 15 years old enrolled in U.S. schools who spoke a language other than English at home increased by 863,000—or 41 percent.

Sometimes language differences can be used to advantage. Andres Echavarria, an aide with the early childhood center program in Oakland, California, has used the differences as a springboard to advance multiculturalism.

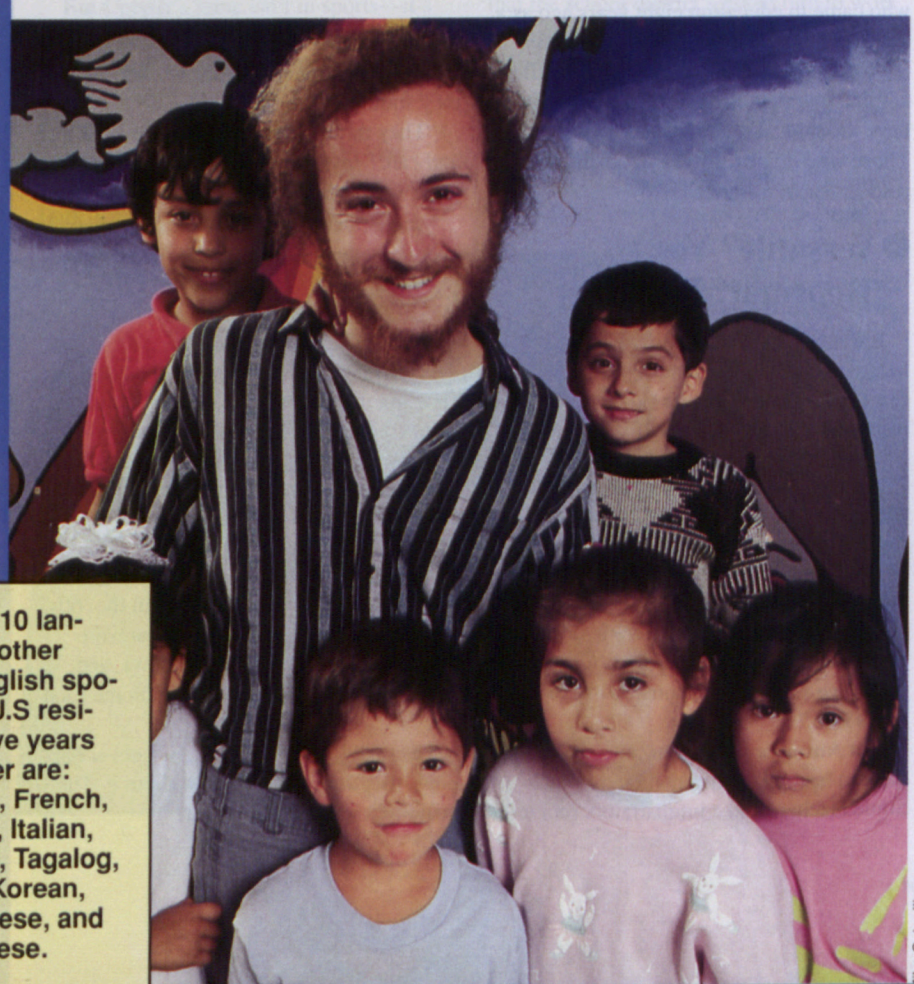
Echavarria recently worked at the Stonehurst Childhood Care Center, where most of the children speak English. When two little girls who spoke only Spanish joined his program, their behavior was predictable.

"They were very quiet because they were shy about speaking Spanish in front of the others," relates Echavarria. "But I was able to help by speaking a little Spanish to them.

"Using too much Spanish might have handicapped them from learning English. But speaking just a little helped them feel more at home. Soon the other kids wanted to learn Spanish words, and the girls were teaching them how to say the alphabet and count."

In fact the Oakland preschoolers were so eager to learn more that they mastered some simple words in several languages and were able to identify on a map the countries where those languages are spoken.

Many paraprofessionals help school personnel handle students' cultural differences. Delores Merkley, a bilingual aide in Bremerton, Washington, worked with one



Andres Echavarria, a paraprofessional in the Oakland, California, early childhood education program, uses language differences to unite children as students and friends.

Mike Spinelli

The top 10 languages other than English spoken by U.S residents five years and older are: Spanish, French, German, Italian, Chinese, Tagalog, Polish, Korean, Vietnamese, and Portuguese.

PARAPROFESSIONALS

Richard Nowitz

Today, ethnic minorities make up 38.7 percent of total U.S. public school enrollment. The breakdown: Black, 28 percent; Hispanic, 12.7 percent; Asian American/ Pacific Islander, 3.5 percent; and Native American, 1.0 percent.

Virginia paraprofessional Sangthong Naraporn draws on her own experience as an immigrant to help students at Bailey's Elementary School.

sixth grader who was acting very withdrawn, didn't hand in homework, and seemed confused.

Merkley, who speaks Spanish and Portuguese and is learning Tagalog, found out the student came from a society "where school was treated much more casually than it is here. He was overwhelmed by our educational structure where, when a teacher says a report is due on Thursday, that's the day it's due.

"Fortunately," Merkley adds, "the problem was solved by simply explaining to the boy that things are not so relaxed here. I think most problems can be solved by talking one-on-one."

In 1960, Census reports show that 23,446,000 U.S. residents five years and older spoke a language other than English at home. In 1990, that figure was 31,345,000—14 percent of all residents 5 years old and older.

Interpreter-transliterator-tutor

Arthur Chapman-Smith acts as a bridge between the hearing and the hearing impaired at three high schools in San Diego, California.

Most of the hearing-impaired students are mainstreamed for at least some of their classes. And when that happens, Chapman-Smith is there to interpret for them.

Chapman-Smith works mostly with one student at a time. He signs and speaks at the same time. That way, a hearing-impaired student can follow either his lips or his signs.

"Sometimes cultural differences come up. Suppose a teacher is talking and wants quiet. Two deaf students are signing, and I have to tell them to be quiet. They talk by signing, but the teacher isn't used to it."

Occasionally, in a tense situation, Chapman-Smith is also a mediator.

"When I'm interpreting, I try to leave my feelings at the door. But sometimes that's difficult, and I find myself saying, 'Excuse me, I need to interject here. You're missing each other's point.'"

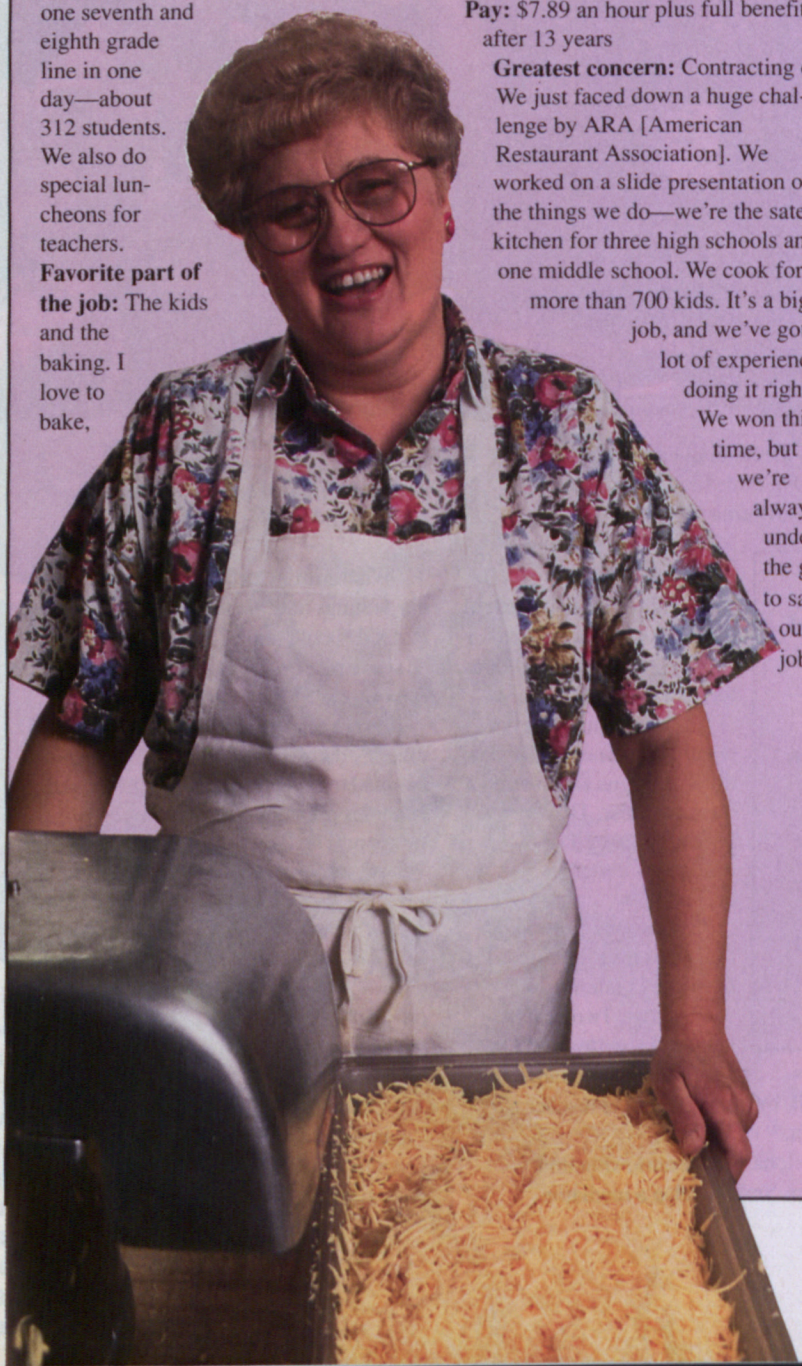
As school populations become more diverse, the need for school employees to handle language and cultural differences becomes greater—and paraprofessionals frequently lead the way.

But, sometimes, Sangthong Naraporn says, the kids take the lead. "A boy from Japan, who didn't understand a word of English, joined our class recently and, by chance, was teamed with a boy who spoke only Spanish.

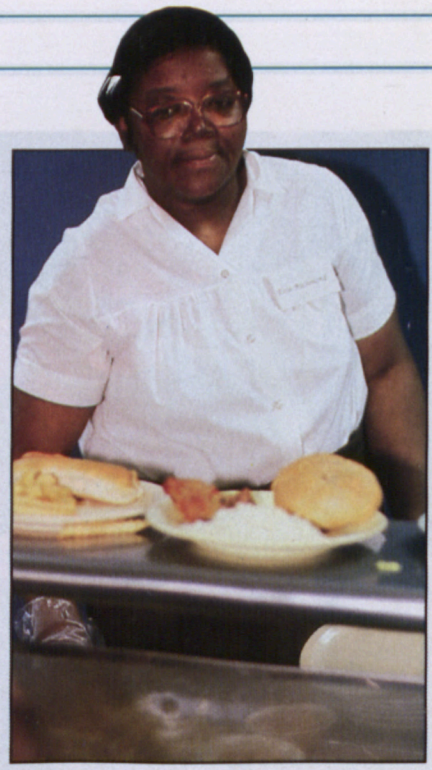
"The two played quietly at first," Naraporn says, "then all of a sudden both started laughing. One was speaking Japanese and one Spanish, but it didn't seem to make any difference. They really were having a good time."

Nancy Zuver

Local Association, state: Jackson Education Association-Education Support Personnel, Michigan
Job title: Baker
Job duties: We're short-staffed right now, so in addition to baking, I'm a cook, a server, even a part-time cashier. We prepare meals for high school and middle school students. I serve three high school lines and one seventh and eighth grade line in one day—about 312 students. We also do special luncheons for teachers.
Favorite part of the job: The kids and the baking. I love to bake, and the kids are a wonderful group. I really love them and my job.
Most unusual day: The day we had a total power outage. Nothing worked except the gas stoves. There we were, making macaroni and cheese by flashlight because we still had kids to feed. We cooked under the light of two large flashlights held by my supervisor. I must admit, it was one of our best meals.
Pay: $7.89 an hour plus full benefits, after 13 years
Greatest concern: Contracting out. We just faced down a huge challenge by ARA [American Restaurant Association]. We worked on a slide presentation of all the things we do—we're the satellite kitchen for three high schools and one middle school. We cook for more than 700 kids. It's a big job, and we've got a lot of experience doing it right. We won this time, but we're always under the gun to save our jobs.



Robert Chase

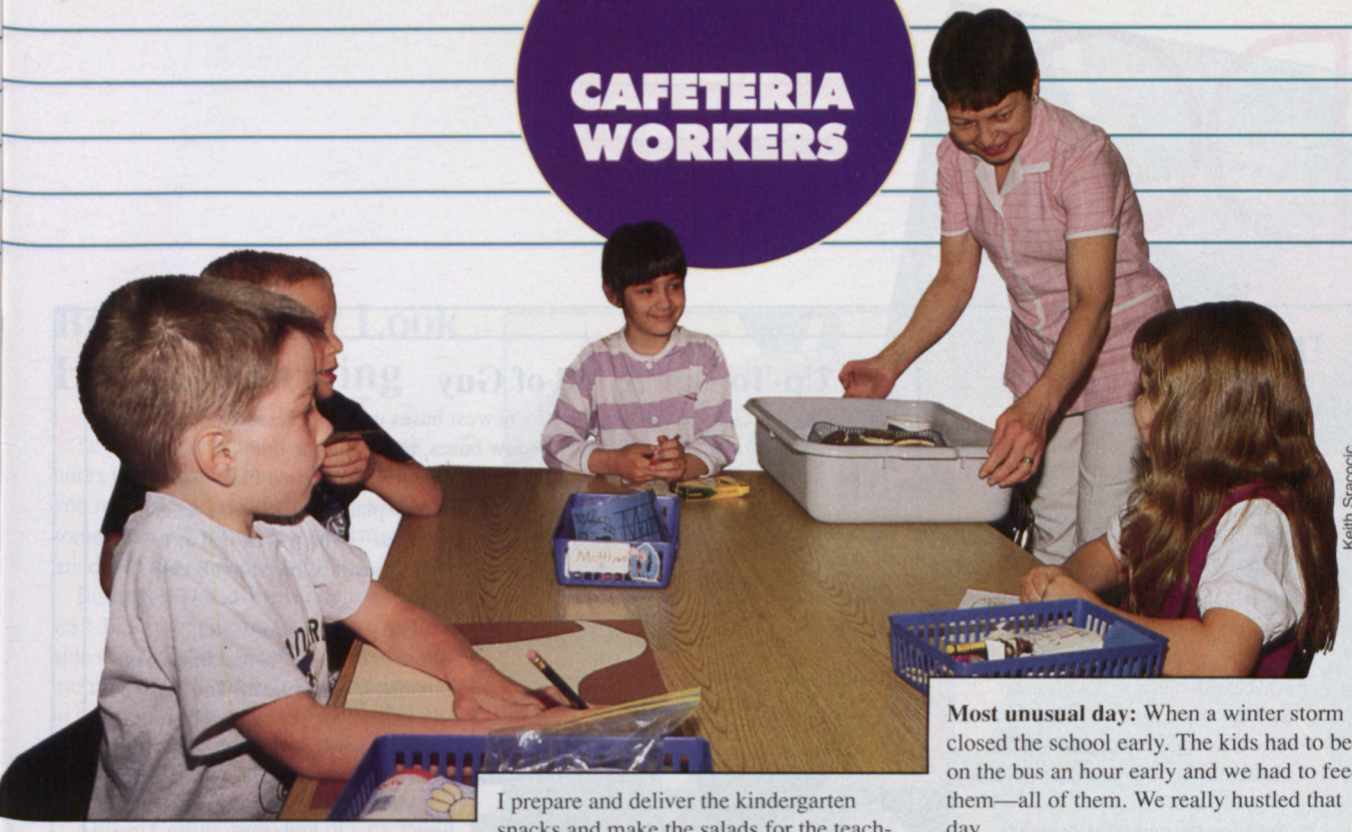


Steve Gates

Eva Richmond

Local Association, state: Birmingham Education Support Staff Association, Alabama
Job title: Fry cook
Job duties: My title may be fry cook, but starting the moment I get there in the morning, I also prep the fryer, clean the dish tables, work the steam tables, wash pots and pans, clean boxes, and clean and fill the Slurk machine, which makes frozen dessert drinks.
Favorite part of the job: Working the steam table or washing the dishes just after frying—it cools you off, especially after frying enough chicken for 500 kids. Once the steam and hot water start going, though, I'm hot again.
Most unusual day: Just about every day. There's always something happening.
Pay: $8.36 an hour after 12 years
Greatest concern: Stress and safety. You're always under pressure, and it's hard to keep calm because the working conditions can be difficult. You're leaning over a gas stove, working on a steam table, stirring huge batches of ground beef and hurting your wrist, lifting heavy boxes. I've even experienced breathing problems. You can really worry about your health.

CAFETERIA WORKERS



Keith Sracocic

Norma Riccio

Local Association, state: Schuylkill Haven Area Education Support Staff Association, Pennsylvania
Job title: Head cook
Job duties: I arrive at 7 a.m. right when the milk arrives, and I arrange it so cartons that need to be used first are in front. I'm in charge of setting up for the day's menu. I prepare and deliver the kindergarten snacks and make the salads for the teachers. I also do the kitchen laundry.
Favorite part of the job: Taking the snacks to the kindergartners and answering their questions. They ask if we baked the cookies from scratch. They want to know if we'll make Rice Krispie snacks. Then they wrap their arms around your legs with a big hug to say thanks. That really makes my day.
Most unusual day: When a winter storm closed the school early. The kids had to be on the bus an hour early and we had to feed them—all of them. We really hustled that day.
Pay: With my stipend as head cook: $10.67 an hour after 12 years
Greatest concern: The lack of discipline among kids these days. It's getting worse and worse. I see so many kids—third and fourth graders—pushing and shoving each other in the lunch lines. My son's a substitute teacher, and he sees the same thing. It just breaks my heart.

Mike Mathers

M.L. (Sam) Dick

Local Association, state: North Pole Education Support Staff Association, Alaska
Job title: Kitchen supervisor
Job duties: I oversee the preparation of meals for 800 students. I also created a vocational training program for special ed students. They spend three years in our kitchen, move into the high school food service program, then into jobs in food service. That's something I'm proud of.
Favorite part of the job: Watching the progress of the special ed kids. One year, I had a fetal alcohol syndrome child who just crouched in the corner of the kitchen. Three years later she was one of the leaders.
Most unusual day: No single day comes to mind, but all the days I spend training the special ed children are so rewarding, every one of them is memorable for one reason or another.
Pay: $12 an hour, seven hours a day, after 5 years
Greatest concern: Not enough respect for the work we do. People don't realize the role we have in children's lives. Kids count on me to have their lunch—or breakfast—ready, and we never turn a child away. Without their meals, kids are like cars without gas.

Transport Trends

Here's what's going on in the world on wheels.

- **Signs of funding pressures:** more buses on 15- instead of 10-year replacement cycles, more parent-pay programs, increased walking distances, fewer or no activity trips.
- **More service to special needs children,** including at-risk infants and toddlers.
- **Average transportation cost:** regular education student: $324 special education student: $1,372.
- **Average number of students per route:** regular education, 61; special education: 10.
- **Districts with more than 1,000 buses** (including contractor buses):
  New York City—3,376
  Los Angeles Unified—2,666
  Chicago—2,536
  Milwaukee—1,600
  Fairfax County, VA—1,233
  Dallas County, TX—1,209
  Dade County, FL—1,135
  Philadelphia—1,065
  Hillsborough County, FL—1,047
  Prince George's County, MD—1,028.
- **School bus contractors with more than 2,000 buses:**
  Laidlaw Transit, Ltd.—20,250
  Mayflower Contract Services—7,377
  Ryder Student Trans.—7,050
  Natl. School Bus Service—3,256
  Vancom Inc.—2,772
  Durham Transportation, Inc.—2,528
  Charterways Transportation—2,307.
- **Newest wrinkle:** painting bus roofs white to keep buses cool.
- **Favorite alternative fuel for school buses:** compressed natural gas (CNG). At least that's the consensus among bus manufacturer representatives speaking at the 1991 meeting of the National Association for Pupil Transportation.

Sources: *School Bus Fleet; School Transportation Director;* assorted news stories.

An Up-To-Date Kind of Guy

About 70 of the Tulsa school district's newest buses use compressed natural gas (CNG) instead of gasoline for fuel. A few buses, including the one Ike White drives, allow the driver to switch back and forth between the two fuels.

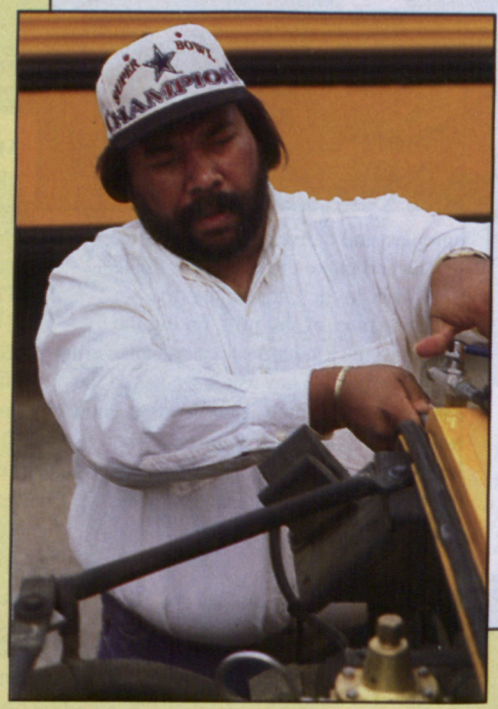
"Compressed natural gas is a nice fuel," White explains. "It lets you accelerate very smoothly up to about 50 or 55 miles per hour—which is as fast as a school bus is allowed to go anyway.

"The real virtue of CNG," White continues, "is that there's no exhaust: it burns clean. You can talk behind the bus while it's running and never cough the way you would with gasoline.

"Also, it's cheaper than gasoline."

But is CNG safe? "When the tank is ruptured," White says, "CNG dissipates quickly. It's not as explosive as gasoline fumes would be."

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is considering adopting fuel integrity requirements for vehicles using CNG and performance requirements for CNG fuel tanks.



Ike White (at left) hooks his bus up to a storage tank so it can be fueled with compressed natural gas.

Tulsa bus driver Ike White surveys his bus's recently painted white roof from inside the combination ventilator/-escape hatch. "Between the ventilator and the white top," White says, "the temperature may be a degree or two cooler inside the bus."

Photos by Steve Jennings

BUS DRIVERS

But It Doesn't Look Like Bus Driving

The problem: putting in enough work hours to make a 40-hour-a-week job when you're a school bus driver. The solution: do some other job for the school district in the middle of the work day.

Bus driver David Torres, treasurer of ESP-El Paso, in Texas, works as a teacher aide (but at a driver's salary rate) one morning a week. He helps teach carpentry to a special ed class every Wednesday morning. When the session ends, he puts the class in his bus and takes them back to Bowie High School, their home base.

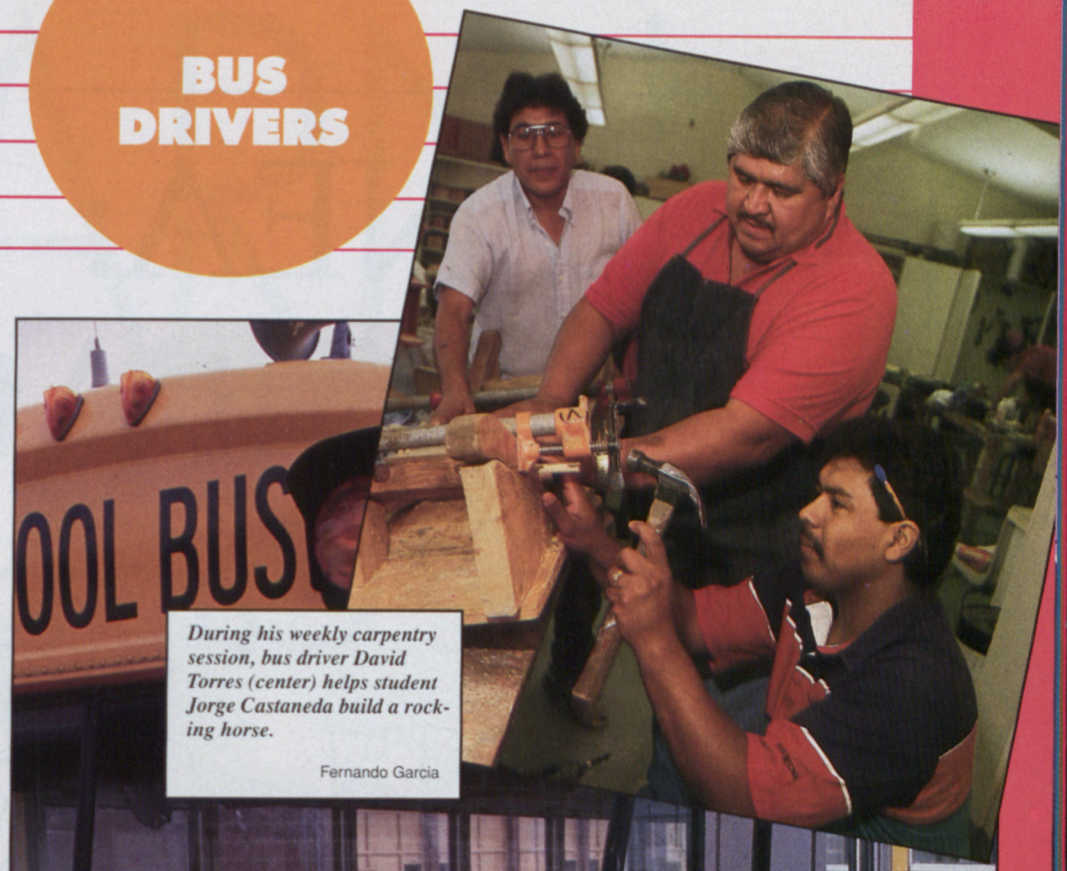
Allison Collins, president of Colorado's St. Vrain Valley Bus Drivers Association, reupholsters bus seats and other furnishings for her school district two days a week.

"I started on an old Singer I found in the garage," Collins says, "and taught myself. Now I have the right equipment—a better sewing machine and a staple gun."

Both drivers enjoy their non-driving work.

"It eases the monotony," Torres explains, "and you get to be creative."

Collins says she gets a kick out of renewing cots for the nurse's office and chairs for special education.



During his weekly carpentry session, bus driver David Torres (center) helps student Jorge Castaneda build a rocking horse.

Fernando Garcia

Colorado's Allison Collins takes a break from bus driving to reupholster school furniture.

Lisa Griffin

NEA Goes to Bat for Bus Drivers on Testing Regs

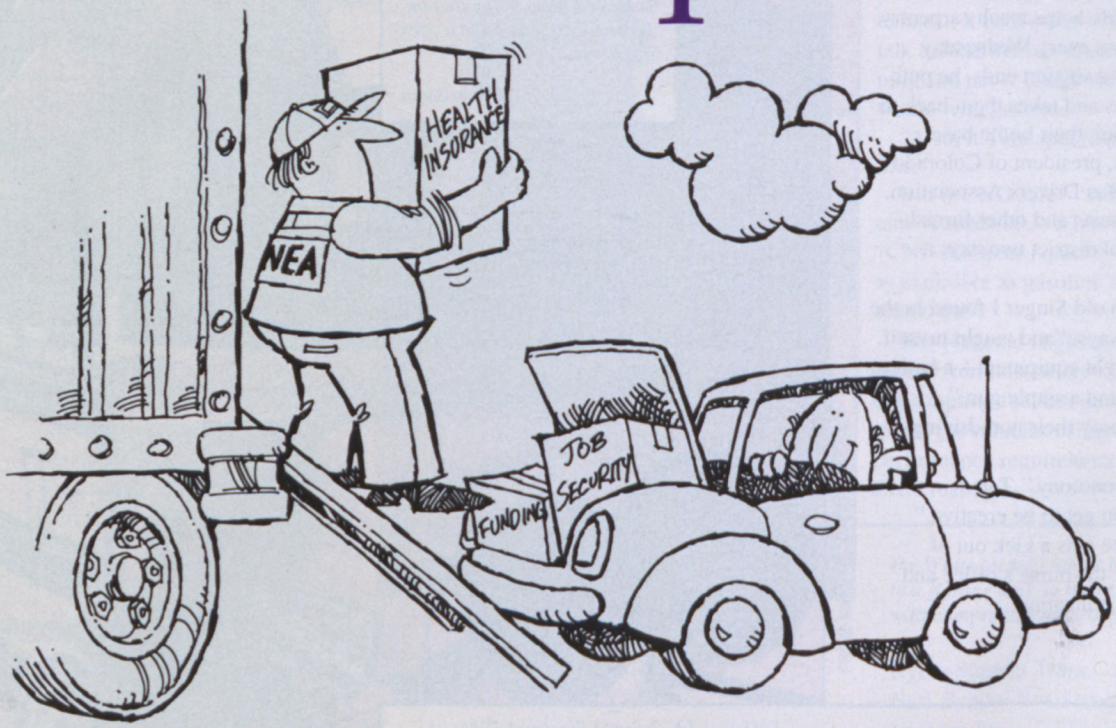
In comments filed this spring, the NEA urged the U.S. Department of Transportation to significantly revise its proposed regulations for drug and alcohol testing of transportion employees in safety-sensitive jobs—a category that includes some 10,000 Association members who are school bus drivers.

Among NEA's concerns: possible violations of due process and other employee rights—including loss of employment without the opportunity for a hearing; the possibility that employees guilty of no violation will incur major financial burdens; lack of provision for job reinstatement.

The regulations are expected to be issued in final form this fall, with two effective dates: one year after the issue date for school districts with 50 or more bus drivers; two years after, for districts with fewer than 50 drivers.

The regs implement the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991.

NEA: Clout At The Capital



When you're an NEA member, you've got lobbyists who work just for you—for increased education funding, better health insurance, secure pensions, and more. In your state capital and in the nation's capital, NEA's skilled lobbyists speak for you. And they've got the support of 2.1 million education employees nationwide. From the school house to the White House, NEA's your union, helping you get where you want to go.

TOGETHER, WE MAKE EDUCATION WORK

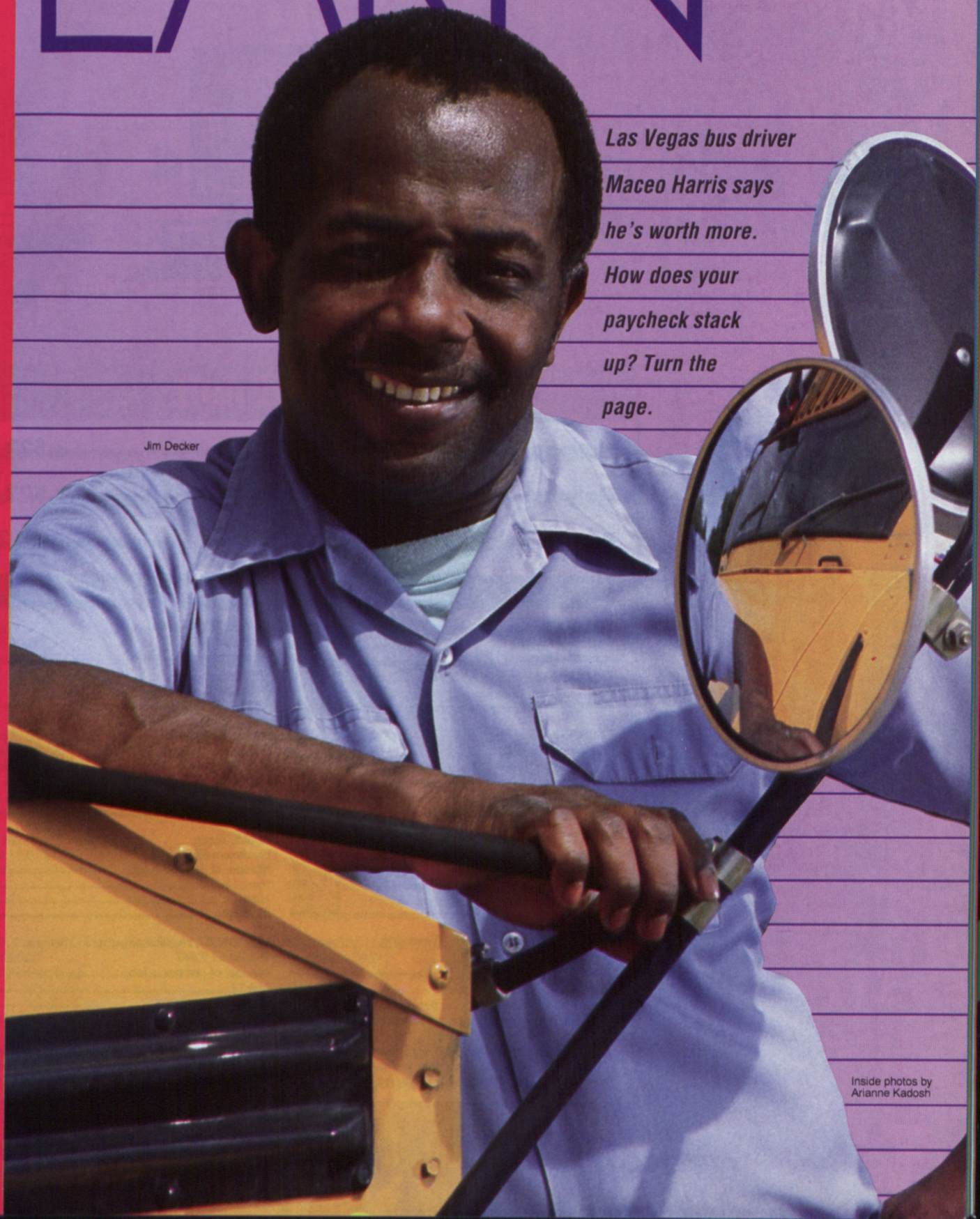
nea
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

WHAT WE

EARN

Las Vegas bus driver Maceo Harris says he's worth more. How does your paycheck stack up? Turn the page.

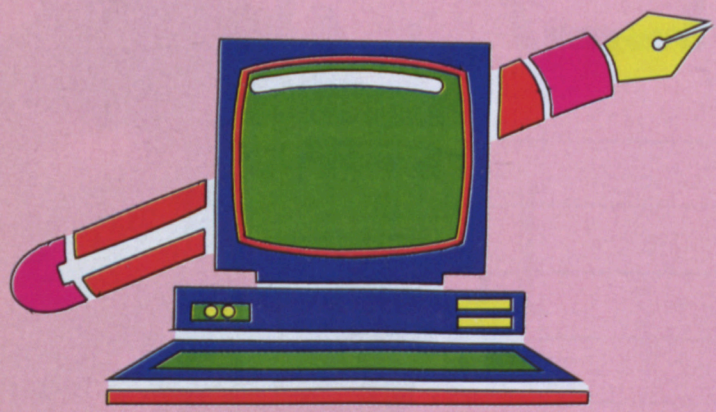
Jim Decker



Inside photos by Arianne Kadosh

- **Name:** Mary Hubbell
- **Local Association, state:** Ithaca City School District Employees' Association, New York
- **Years of service:** 30
- **Current pay:** $32,000 for 12 months
- **Most recent major purchase:** A house in August 1990 and a Chevy Lumina last September. Those were the two biggest in 30 years.
- **Biggest financial worry:** When I retire, I'm not sure whether there's going to be enough there to make it. I feel I have to work until I can collect Social Security.
- **I think I'm worth:** $10,000 more, if I were in an office that had a senior stenographer position approved.
- **Most rewarding on-the-job moment:** Knowing that people trust me and come to me for answers, and that I'm loyal to their confidence.
- **I'm looking forward to:** Retirement, even though I'm concerned about it. I'd like to get an RV and just go. We're auto racing fans, and we could follow the NASCAR races.

WHAT WE EA



Central Office Secretaries

National Average Salary, 1991-92 .....$22,309

National Average Salary, 1992-93 .....$22,770

Percent Salary Increase 2.1%

1992-93 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ALABAMA, Dothan
Enrollment 10,000
Number of persons in job 11
Low $17,893
High $22,096
Average $20,152

CALIFORNIA, San Diego
Enrollment 123,772
Number of persons in job 80
Low $20,254
High $37,216
Average $26,523

ILLINOIS, Palatine
Enrollment 11,013
Number of persons in job 20
Low $19,788
High $45,600
Average $28,693

KENTUCKY, Campbell County, Alexandria
Enrollment 4,300
Number of persons in job 6
Low $10,192
High $16,289
Average $13,705

NEW JERSEY, Glen Ridge
Enrollment 1,125
Number of persons in job 3
Low $32,725
High $38,054
Average $34,865

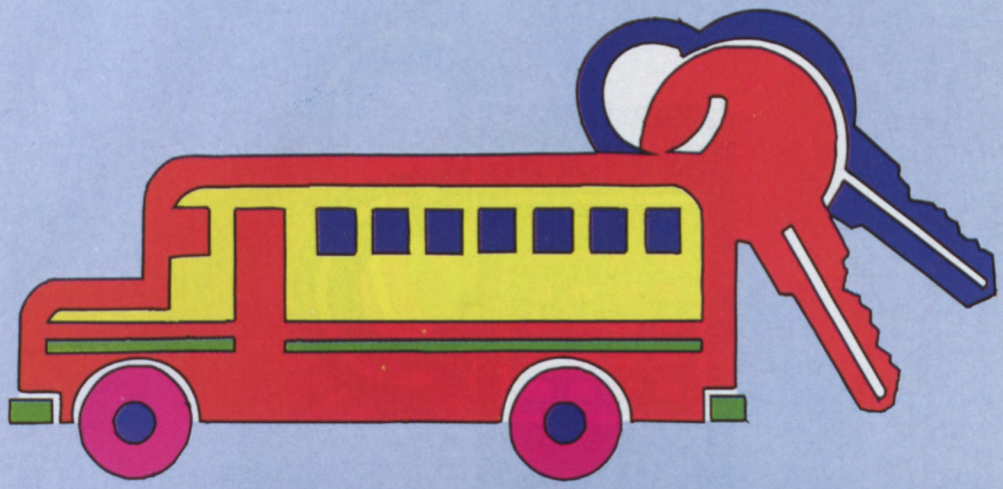
NEW YORK, Ithaca
Enrollment 6,311
Number of persons in job 13
Low $21,736
High $35,769
Average $29,471

TEXAS, Austin
Enrollment 67,066
Number of persons in job 100
Low $15,493
High $42,768
Average $24,700

WISCONSIN, Hamilton, Sussex
Enrollment 2,967
Number of persons in job 5
Low $20,164
High $28,772
Average $24,389

All figures taken from the *National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools: Part 3, Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel, 1992-93.* © 1993 by Educational Research Service. Hourly wage rates and salaries presented as national averages reflect non-weighted averages of the approximately 1,000 districts that provide data reported to ERS. Appreciation is expressed to ERS for use of these data.

RN



- **Name:** Maceo Harris
- **Local Association, state:** ESEA, Las Vegas, Nevada
- **Years of service:** 12
- **Current pay:** $14.35 an hour
- **Most recent major purchase:** A '90 Dodge Ram van, about two years ago.
- **Biggest financial worry:** Paying the rent.
- **I think I'm worth:** About $15 or $16 an hour.
- **Most rewarding on-the-job moment:** When I train new bus drivers. I teach them defensive driving—mind reading, in other words.
- **I'm looking forward to:** Retirement, hopefully within the next couple of years.

Bus Drivers

National Average Hourly Wage, 1991-92.....$10.04

National Average Hourly Wage, 1992-93.....$10.15

Percent Wage Increase 1.1%

1992-93 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ALABAMA, Dothan
Enrollment 10,000
Number of persons in job 80
Low.....$8.52
High.....$10.01
Average.....$9.19

CALIFORNIA, San Diego
Enrollment 123,772
Number of persons in job 224
Low.....$11.55
High.....$14.04
Average.....$13.33

ILLINOIS, Palatine
Enrollment 11,013
Number of persons in job 110
Low.....$10.40
High.....$13.20
Average.....$12.76

KENTUCKY, Campbell County, Alexandria
Enrollment 4,300
Number of persons in job 60
Low.....$7.82
High.....$9.80
Average.....$9.24

NEW JERSEY, Glen Ridge
Enrollment 1,125
Number of persons in job 2
Low.....$19.31
High.....$20.67
Average.....$19.99

NEW YORK, Ithaca
Enrollment 6,311
Number of persons in job 65
Low.....$6.98
High.....$13.00
Average.....$7.95

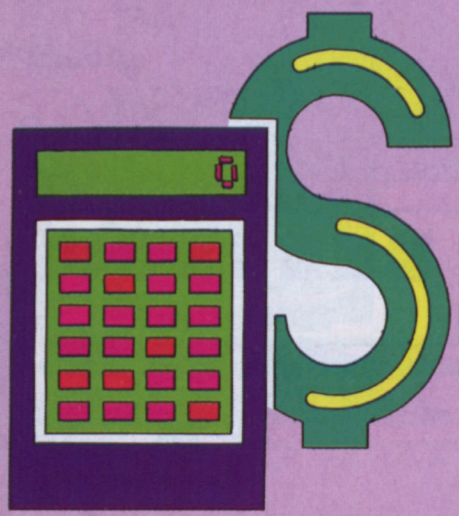
TEXAS, Austin
Enrollment 67,066
Number of persons in job 412
Low.....$7.58
High.....$13.58
Average.....$8.66

WISCONSIN, Hamilton, Sussex
Enrollment 2,967
Number of persons in job 2
Low.....$7.25
High.....$7.65
Average.....$7.45

All figures taken from the *National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools: Part 3, Wages and Salaries Paid Support Personnel, 1992-93.* © 1993 by Educational Research Service. Hourly wage rates and salaries presented as national averages reflect non-weighted averages of the approximately 1,000 districts that provide data reported to ERS. Appreciation is expressed to ERS for use of these data.

- **Name:** Joyce Turner
- **Local Association, state:** Baltimore County Instructional Assistants and Clerical Employees, Maryland
- **Years of service:** 7
- **Current pay:** $24,515 a year
- **Most recent major purchase:** A computer, for my kids and myself.
- **Biggest financial worry:** That everything else's going to keep going up and my salary's going to keep going down. We haven't had a raise since '91, and we've had furloughs, too. We're going backwards.
- **I think I'm worth:** More than $30,000.
- **Most rewarding on-the-job moment:** When we run a perfect payroll. That happens very seldom, because a lot of changes come through.
- **I'm looking forward to:** Medical science finding a cure that will help someone in my family.

WHAT WE EA



Payroll Clerks

National Average Salary, 1991-92 .....$22,215

National Average Salary, 1992-93 .....$22,605

Percent Salary Increase.....1.8%

1992-93 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ALABAMA, Dothan
Enrollment 10,000
Number of persons in job 6
Low.....$21,526
High.....$26,646
Average.....$22,759

CALIFORNIA, San Diego
Enrollment 123,772
Number of persons in job 33
Low.....$20,749
High.....$27,807
Average.....$21,979

ILLINOIS, Palatine
Enrollment 11,013
Number of persons in job 11
Low.....$20,076
High.....$40,200
Average.....$25,629

KENTUCKY, Campbell County, Alexandria
Enrollment 4,300
Number of persons in job 2
Low.....$23,752
High.....$23,752
Average.....$23,752

NEW JERSEY, Glen Ridge
Enrollment 1,125
Number of persons in job 2
Low.....$26,815
High.....$28,964
Average.....$27,890

NEW YORK, Ithaca
Enrollment 6,311
Number of persons in job 6
Low.....$17,847
High.....$38,403
Average.....$27,496

TEXAS, Austin
Enrollment 67,066
Number of persons in job 53
Low.....$14,278
High.....$39,037
Average.....$24,111

WISCONSIN, Hamilton, Sussex
Enrollment 2,967
Number of persons in job 2
Low.....$18,012
High.....$20,164
Average.....$19,088

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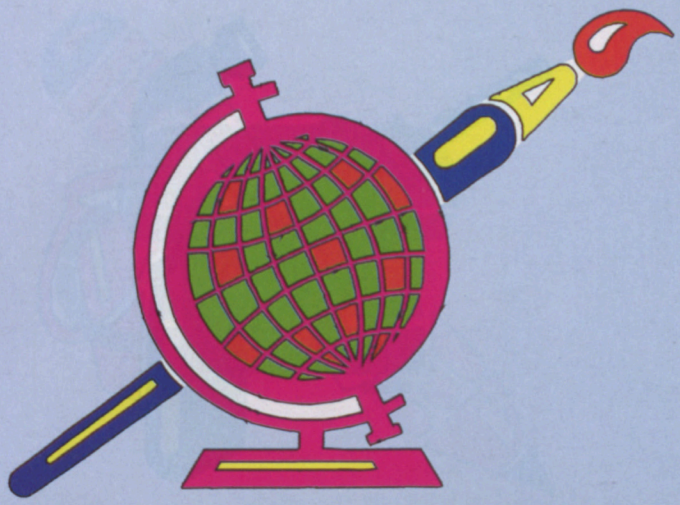

Instructional Assistants

National Average Hourly Wage, 1991-92.....$8.15

National Average Hourly Wage, 1992-93.....$8.31

Percent Wage Increase 2.0%

1992-93 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ALABAMA, Dothan
Enrollment 10,000
Number of persons in job 110
Low.....$6.79
High.....$12.26
Average.....$7.07

CALIFORNIA, San Diego
Enrollment 123,772
Number of persons in job 2,067
Low.....$7.26
High.....$11.55
Average.....$9.67

ILLINOIS, Palatine
Enrollment 11,013
Number of persons in job .....ND
Low .....ND
High .....ND
Average .....ND

KENTUCKY, Campbell County, Alexandria
Enrollment 4,300
Number of persons in job 24
Low.....$5.26
High.....$7.78
Average.....$6.66

NEW JERSEY, Glen Ridge
Enrollment 1,125
Number of persons in job 9
Low.....$9.00
High.....$12.48
Average .....ND

NEW YORK, Ithaca
Enrollment 6,311
Number of persons in job .....ND
Low.....$5.88
High.....$20.62
Average.....$8.40

TEXAS, Austin
Enrollment 67,066
Number of persons in job 433
Low.....$7.64
High.....$11.33
Average.....$8.40

WISCONSIN, Hamilton, Sussex
Enrollment 2,967
Number of persons in job 20
Low.....$5.25
High.....$9.81
Average.....$7.40

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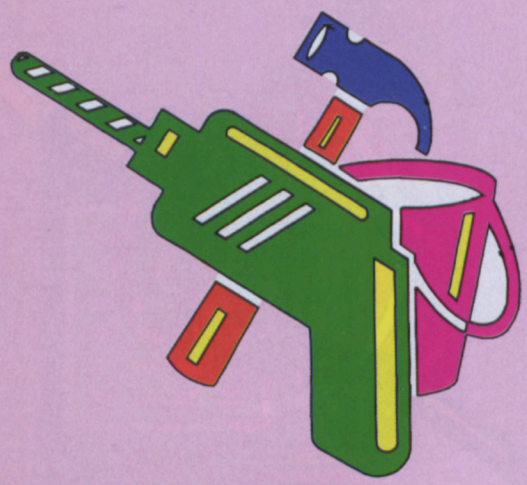
- **Name:** Marilyn Gonzalez
- **Local Association, state:** Cudahy Education Support Personnel Council 10, Wisconsin
- **Years of service:** 24
- **Current pay:** $9.66 an hour
- **Most recent major purchase:** A truck last summer—it's how my husband gets back and forth to work.
- **Biggest financial worry:** Whether I'll have enough money for health insurance when I retire—and I want to retire.
- **I think I'm worth:** I don't know if anybody could give me enough money—I value myself that much.
- **Most rewarding on-the-job moment:** Working with special ed kids one on one and seeing them improve from week to week or year to year.
- **I'm looking forward to:** Retiring in a warmer climate, and staying in good health to enjoy that.

- **Name:** Mike Ragland
- **Local Association, state:** NEA Shawnee Mission, Kansas
- **Years of service:** 9
- **Current pay:** $10.49 an hour
- **Most recent major purchase:** After the interest rates got so low, I took part of my savings and paid off my house.
- **Biggest financial worry:** Trying to make money on my savings for retirement.
- **I think I'm worth:** I believe with my benefits—health insurance, sick days, vacation days—what I'm getting is pretty good, but we'll need a raise next year.
- **Most rewarding on-the-job moment:** Knowing my work is going toward educating kids. I've got two grandchildren myself.
- **I'm looking forward to:** Being able to retire a few years from now.

WHAT WE EA



Custodians

National Average Hourly Wage, 1991-92.....$9.35

National Average Hourly Wage, 1992-93.....$9.51

Percent Wage Increase..... 1.7%

1992-93 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ALABAMA, Dothan
Enrollment 10,000
Number of persons in job 72
Low.....$6.82
High.....$8.92
Average.....$7.43

CALIFORNIA, San Diego
Enrollment 123,772
Number of persons in job 493
Low.....$9.50
High.....$12.73
Average.....$11.98

ILLINOIS, Palatine
Enrollment 11,013
Number of persons in job 95
Low.....$11.58
High.....$15.25
Average.....$14.55

KENTUCKY, Campbell County, Alexandria
Enrollment 4,300
Number of persons in job 20
Low.....$6.00
High.....$8.73
Average.....$7.50

NEW JERSEY, Glen Ridge
Enrollment 1,125
Number of persons in job 16
Low.....$11.15
High.....$18.91
Average..... ND

NEW YORK, Ithaca
Enrollment 6,311
Number of persons in job 17
Low.....$6.74
High.....$15.45
Average.....$7.41

TEXAS, Austin
Enrollment 67,066
Number of persons in job 519
Low.....$5.88
High.....$13.75
Average.....$7.27

WISCONSIN, Hamilton, Sussex
Enrollment 2,967
Number of persons in job 24
Low.....$11.16
High.....$15.34
Average.....$13.80

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- **Name:** Virginia Davis
- **Local Association, state:** Richmond Education Association, Virginia
- **Years of service:** 33
- **Current pay:** $22,000 a year
- **Most recent major purchase:** I haven't made any in a long time. In 1985 I bought a house, and two years ago I had to replace my refrigerator.
- **Biggest financial worry:** Not being able to pay bills. I lost my husband last November, and with one salary instead of two, it's hard.
- **I think I'm worth:** At least $30,000—that's not even $1,000 for each year I've worked.
- **Most rewarding on-the-job moment:** Work in a five-day residential program for seriously disturbed adolescents can be frustrating, but it's rewarding to see these children develop.
- **I'm looking forward to:** Retirement—but I'm not old enough. We have to have 30 years service and be 55.

Building Secretaries

National Average Salary, 1991-92 .....$17,784

National Average Salary, 1992-93 .....$18,104

Percent Salary Increase 1.8%

1992-93 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ALABAMA, Dothan
Enrollment 10,000
Number of persons in job 20
Low.....$14,911
High.....$21,816
Average.....$16,567

CALIFORNIA, San Diego
Enrollment 123,772
Number of persons in job 160
Low.....$21,268
High.....$29,930
Average.....$24,617

ILLINOIS, Palatine
Enrollment 11,013
Number of persons in job 25
Low.....$22,980
High.....$36,360
Average.....$27,863

KENTUCKY, Campbell County, Alexandria
Enrollment 4,300
Number of persons in job 8
Low.....$8,428
High.....$13,470
Average.....$11,333

NEW JERSEY, Glen Ridge
Enrollment 1,125
Number of persons in job 7
Low.....$22,664
High.....$31,989
Average.....$26,024

NEW YORK, Ithaca
Enrollment 6,311
Number of persons in job 8
Low.....$15,189
High.....$33,472
Average.....$21,305

TEXAS, Austin
Enrollment 67,066
Number of persons in job 107
Low.....$14,871
High.....$32,002
Average.....$20,699

WISCONSIN, Hamilton, Sussex
Enrollment 2,967
Number of persons in job 11
Low.....$17,104
High.....$25,379
Average.....$22,743

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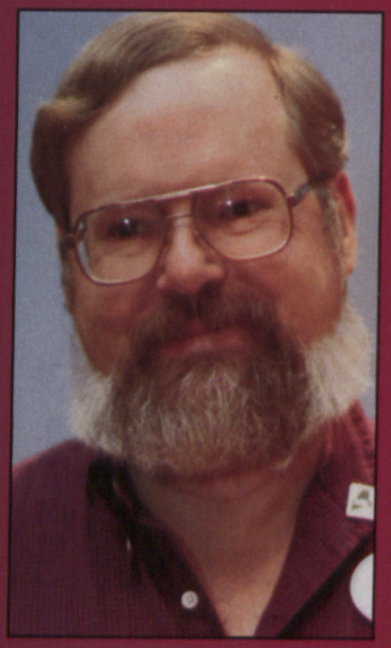
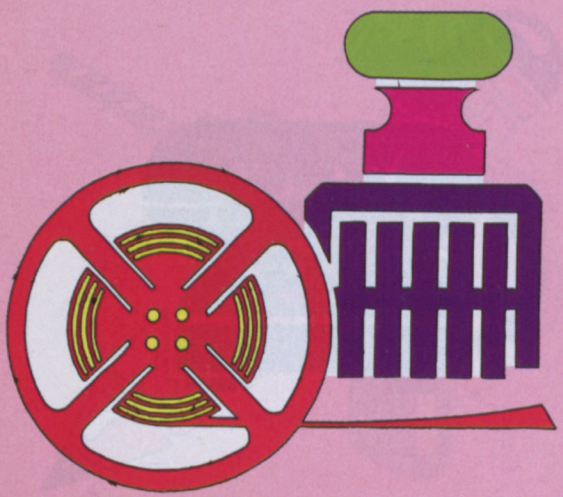


- **Name:** W. Wightman Reilly
- **Local Association, state:** Auburn Education Association, Maine
- **Years of service:** 9 in the library, 6 more in education
- **Current pay:** $10.34 an hour, 6.5 hours a day, 180 days—that's $12,097.80 a year.
- **Most recent major purchase:** A 1987 Subaru station wagon with 4-wheel drive—we got it a week ago.
- **Biggest financial worry:** Our son is 15: college will be coming up soon. Then retirement.
- **I think I'm worth:** All educators deserve more. I do all the hardware and computer things for the library. Often I can fix something before it has to be sent out.
- **Most rewarding on-the-job moment:** When one of our special needs students gets a good report without expecting it, and we've helped them a lot.
- **I'm looking forward to:** Our governor taking care of the budget so we don't have to face the crises we're facing these days.

WHAT WE EA



Library Clerks

National Average Salary, 1991-92 .....$13,347

National Average Salary, 1992-93 .....$13,311

Percent Salary Increase ..... -0.3%

1992-93 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ALABAMA, Dothan
Enrollment 10,000
Number of persons in job 1
Low $12,654
High $12,654
Average $12,654

CALIFORNIA, San Diego
Enrollment 123,772
Number of persons in job 43
Low $18,819
High $25,225
Average $22,250

ILLINOIS, Palatine
Enrollment 11,013
Number of persons in job 28
Low $11,041
High $17,967
Average $13,568

KENTUCKY, Campbell County, Alexandria
Enrollment 4,300
Number of persons in job ..... ND
Low ..... ND
High ..... ND
Average ..... ND

NEW JERSEY, Glen Ridge
Enrollment 1,125
Number of persons in job 2
Low $12,600
High $17,353
Average $14,977

NEW YORK, Ithaca
Enrollment 6,311
Number of persons in job 13
Low $11,541
High $17,546
Average $13,815

TEXAS, Austin
Enrollment 67,066
Number of persons in job 20
Low $13,281
High $18,119
Average $15,292

WISCONSIN, Hamilton, Sussex
Enrollment 2,967
Number of persons in job 5
Low $9,045
High $13,464
Average $11,474

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Cafeteria Workers

National Average Hourly Wage, 1991-92.....$7.39

National Average Hourly Wage, 1992-93.....$7.56

Percent Wage Increase 2.3%

1992-93 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ALABAMA, Dothan
Enrollment 10,000
Number of persons in job 116
Low.....$7.34
High.....$12.62
Average.....$8.45

CALIFORNIA, San Diego
Enrollment 123,772
Number of persons in job 969
Low.....$6.75
High.....$9.05
Average.....$8.45

ILLINOIS, Palatine
Enrollment 11,013
Number of persons in job 80
Low.....$6.90
High.....$12.85
Average.....$8.25

KENTUCKY, Campbell County, Alexandria
Enrollment 4,300
Number of persons in job 76
Low.....$5.57
High.....$7.87
Average.....$7.15

NEW JERSEY, Glen Ridge
Enrollment 1,125
Number of persons in job 4
Low.....$8.50
High.....$15.68
Average..... ND

NEW YORK, Ithaca
Enrollment 6,311
Number of persons in job 46
Low.....$5.13
High.....$11.57
Average.....$6.83

TEXAS, Austin
Enrollment 67,066
Number of persons in job 516
Low.....$5.88
High.....$10.41
Average.....$7.43

WISCONSIN, Hamilton, Sussex
Enrollment 2,967
Number of persons in job 24
Low.....$5.00
High.....$9.17
Average.....$6.85

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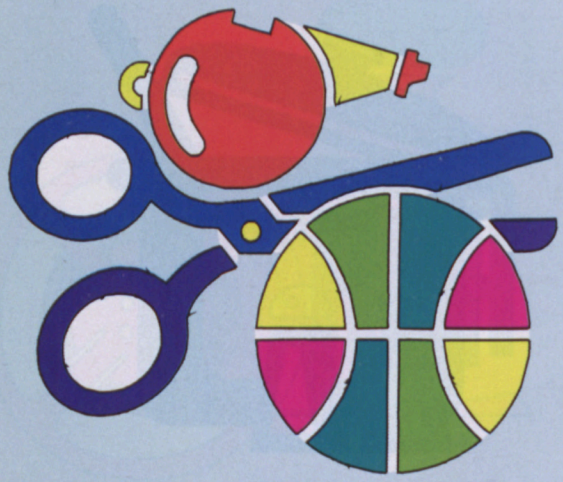
- **Name:** Minerva Garcia
- **Local Association, state:** ESP of San Antonio, Texas
- **Years of service:** 27
- **Current pay:** $20,183, for a 10-month year, 8 hours a day
- **Most recent major purchase:** My living room set.
- **Biggest financial worry:** That my district might be contracted out. I won't be old enough to retire for 10 years, and it wouldn't be fair to lose my job.
- **I think I'm worth:** We should be getting more. We're there very early and we do more than contract hours when something special comes up. We don't set out to volunteer, but if you're there, you can't help it.
- **Most rewarding on-the-job moment:** When students who've gone on to the high school come back to say they had a very good time talking with me and I helped them a lot. That makes me feel like a giant.
- **I'm looking forward to:** This year, becoming president of the San Antonio School Food Service Association and Vice President of the ESP Association of San Antonio. From each I can help the other.

- **Name:** Mark Walpole
- **Local Association, state:** Las Virgenes Classified Association, California
- **Years of service**: 16 in the district
- **Current pay:** For library, noon, and afterschool assignments, from $10.45 to $11.43 an hour; for PE, $16.57 an hour. Net monthly pay is about $1,700 for 40-hour weeks.
- **Most recent major purchase:** A Nissan Stanza, 18 months ago.
- **Biggest financial worry:** Paying the rent and making the car payment.
- **I think I'm worth:** As much as a teacher, for what I do.
- **Most rewarding on-the-job moment:** The look on a child's face, and the way a child responds, when they accomplish something they really weren't sure they could do.
- **I'm looking forward to:** Finding out what I'll be doing next year. I'm assured of a job, but I'll be doing something else. The parent/faculty club covers most of my salary.

WHAT WE EA



Noninstructional Assistants

National Average Hourly Wage, 1991-92.....$7.70

National Average Hourly Wage, 1992-93.....$7.82

Percent Wage Increase..... 1.6%

1992-93 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ALABAMA, Dothan
Enrollment 10,000
Number of persons in job 17
Low.....$6.79
High.....$7.39
Average.....$6.96

CALIFORNIA, San Diego
Enrollment 123,772
Number of persons in job .....ND
Low .....ND
High .....ND
Average .....ND

ILLINOIS, Palatine
Enrollment 11,013
Number of persons in job 69
Low.....$9.60
High.....$14.49
Average.....$10.75

KENTUCKY, Campbell County, Alexandria
Enrollment 4,300
Number of persons in job .....ND
Low.....ND
High .....ND
Average ..... ND

NEW JERSEY, Glen Ridge
Enrollment 1,125
Number of persons in job 4
Low.....$9.00
High.....$13.77
Average .....ND

NEW YORK, Ithaca
Enrollment 6,311
Number of persons in job .....ND
Low.....$5.32
High.....$11.20
Average.....$6.51

TEXAS, Austin
Enrollment 67,066
Number of persons in job 6
Low.....$8.68
High.....$10.74
Average.....$9.82

WISCONSIN, Hamilton, Sussex
Enrollment 2,967
Number of persons in job 8
Low.....$5.75
High.....$10.01
Average.....$7.87

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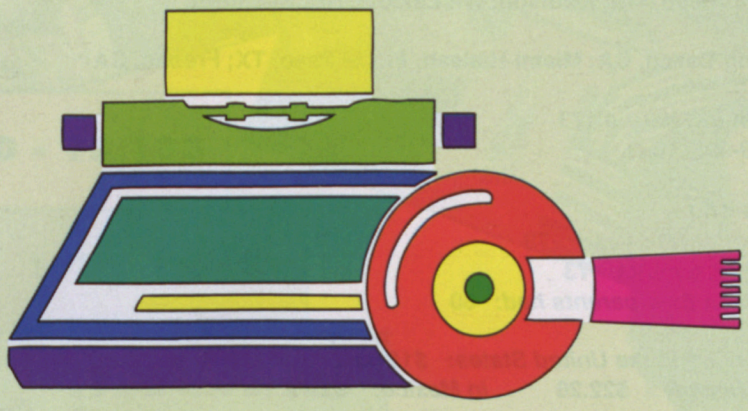

- **Name:** Cynthia Phillips
- **Local Association, state:** Caddo Association of Educators, Louisiana
- **Years of service:** 3
- **Current pay:** $16,078 a year
- **Most recent major purchase:** A '91 Honda Accord, last summer.
- **Biggest financial worry:** Getting the bills paid.
- **I think I'm worth:** At least $18,000.
- **Most rewarding on-the-job moment:** When I answer a call and help prove a person's employment status—so they can get credit, for example.
- **I'm looking forward to:** Being able to buy my own house. I've been living with my parents since I came back from college.

Clerk-Typists

National Average Salary, 1991-92 .....$17,646

National Average Salary, 1992-93 .....$17,772

Percent Salary Increase 0.7%

1992-93 SALARIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ALABAMA, Dothan
Enrollment 10,000
Number of persons in job 9
Low.....$8,306
High.....$16,872
Average.....$14,985

CALIFORNIA, San Diego
Enrollment 123,772
Number of persons in job 321
Low.....$15,104
High.....$24,019
Average.....$22,119

ILLINOIS, Palatine
Enrollment 11,013
Number of persons in job 5
Low.....$15,780
High.....$28,464
Average.....$21,617

KENTUCKY, Campbell County, Alexandria
Enrollment 4,300
Number of persons in job 1
Low.....$10,892
High.....$10,892
Average.....$10,892

NEW JERSEY, Glen Ridge
Enrollment 1,125
Number of persons in job 1
Low.....$26,924
High.....$26,924
Average.....$26,924

NEW YORK, Ithaca
Enrollment 6,311
Number of persons in job .....ND
Low.....ND
High.....ND
Average.....ND

TEXAS, Austin
Enrollment 67,066
Number of persons in job 18
Low.....$11,828
High.....$32,443
Average.....$18,351

WISCONSIN, Hamilton, Sussex
Enrollment 2,967
Number of persons in job 1
Low.....$17,104
High.....$17,104
Average.....$17,104

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A FEW FACTS FOR YOUR FILES

- *Five best metro areas for children, 1993:*
  Burlington, VT; Fargo, ND - Moorhead, MN; Madison, WI; Lincoln, NE; Stamford, CT
  Five worst:
  Houston, TX; Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA; Miami-Hialeah, FL; El Paso, TX; Fresno, CA

- *Number of U.S. teens shot to death in 1990:* 4,173
  Percentage increase over 1989-90: 16

- *Percentage of high school seniors who—*
  Plan to attend college (two-year or four-year): 78
  Think they'll earn more than their parents: 73
  Expect a better quality of life than their parents had: 60

- *Average hourly pay for factory workers in the United States:* $15.45
  in Germany: $22.17 *in Norway:* $22.26 *in Mexico:* $2.17

- *Average salary of U.S. school superintendents:* $85,120

- *Percentage of parents who use "timeouts" to discipline children under 12:* 38
  Percentage who use spankings: 19

- *Percentage of adults who say public schools will improve in the next 15 years—*
  White: 39 *Hispanic:* 46 *Black:* 64

- *Average cost of a visit to the doctor in 1983:* $25.11
  ...in 1992: $42.43

- *Number of Americans* Macworld *magazine estimates may be subject to electronic monitoring on the job:* 20 million

- *Number of classrooms in the U.S. with unacceptably high levels of radon, according to the Environmental Protection Agency:* 73,000

- *State with the highest percentage of baby boomers:* Alaska (39.3 percent)
  State with the lowest percentage: Utah (29 percent)

- *Percentage of citizens 18-24 who voted in the 1992 Presidential election:* 42.8
  ...in the 1988 election: 36.2

Sources: Zero Population Growth's "Children's Stress Index"; The Centers for Disease Control; EdPress; *The Executive Educator; Economic Notes;* Educational Research Service; *New York Times;* Bruskin/Goldring Research, reported in *Education Week;* National PTA/*Newsweek;* American Medical Association; PSI; *USA Today; Macworld; Boston Globe;* Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Census Bureau.

NEA SUPPORT STAFF MEMBERSHIP

• As of April 30, 1993
SOURCE: NEA Membership Records

1980 - 15,183

1981-17,451

1982 - 42,965

1983 - 49,403

1984 - 57,080

1985 - 67,575

1986 - 103,152

1987 - 116,280

1988 - 134,374

1989 - 167,380

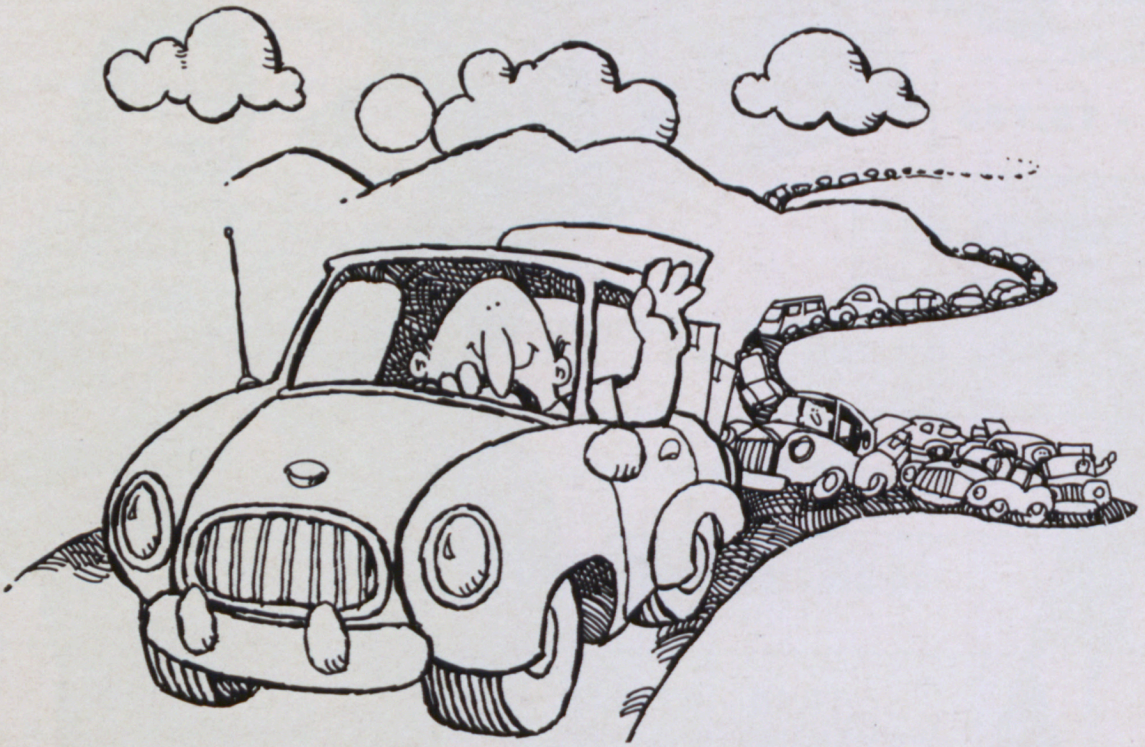
1990 - 184,097

1991 - 203,155

1992 - 213,124

1993 - 223,927*

NEA: Strength In Numbers



When you're an NEA member, you've got the strength of the nation's largest union and largest education organization behind you. NEA's 2.1 million members work in North Pole, Alaska, and Orlando, Florida, in one-room schoolhouses and community colleges, as cooks and teachers and custodians. Uniting the nation's educators under one umbrella, NEA's your union, helping you get where you want to go.

TOGETHER, WE MAKE EDUCATION WORK

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